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October 22 1995

Noble art caught in the money trap

James Murray's death in Glasgow on Sunday, after his British bantamweight title fight, brought new demands from doctors for boxing to be banned. After 49 years of covering the sport, Guardian correspondent **John Rodda** is now close to agreeing with them

HOW MUCH longer can boxing hang its head — until the funeral is over or another wheelchair found for a victim of brain damage? The protagonists will soon return to what was once a noble art and now seems little more than a bloody way of making money.

After 49 years of writing about boxing I recoil along with many of my journalistic colleagues when a fighter dies. It is no longer the occasional accident; death in the ring or irreparable damage is happening too often and the drip, drip, drip on my conscience has finally taken me close to the point where I believe it should be banned.

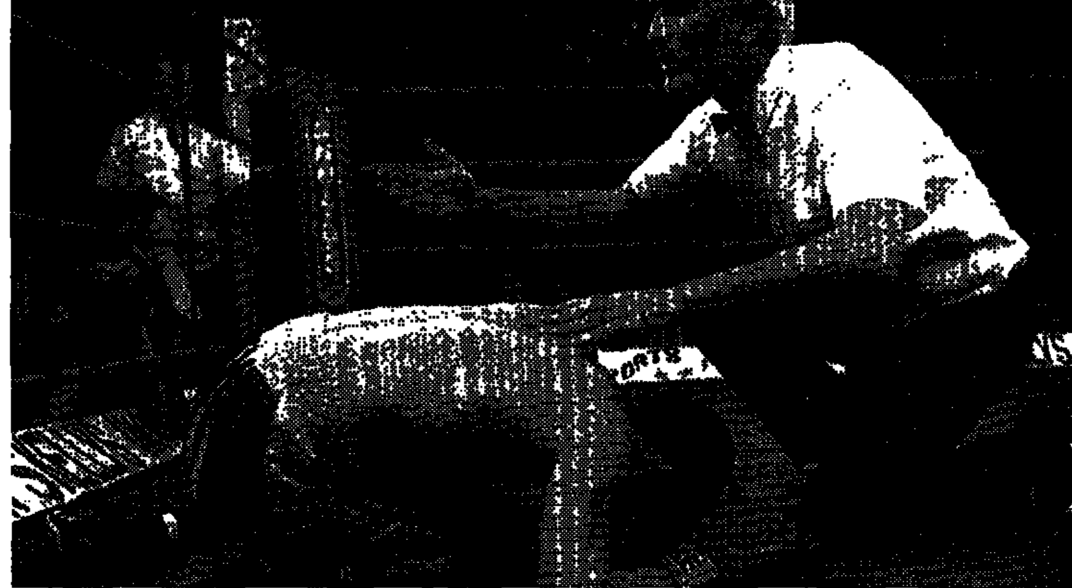
The number of deaths and serious injuries has been rising worldwide for the past 15 years. If the British Boxing Board of Control cannot accept the need to devise measures giving fighters greater protection then it must stop defending the indefensible. Unless it acts before another James Murray, Gerald McLellan or Bradley Stone, the board could be facing a popular protest group which takes the issue into a wider public domain.

The argument that boxing would go underground is hard to support, for it would then not generate the money which makes fighters take the risk they do. There is unlicensed fighting on a very small scale but that is hardly likely to survive if boxing is made unlawful.

The increasing danger in professional boxing comes from several factors: the decline in amateur boxing; the more sophisticated training methods now used by professionals; and a suspicion that some fighters are using banned substances, such as anabolic steroids.

The board has failed to halt the increase in death and damage. Its insistence on ambulances and paramedics at every fight and doctors at the ringside may be seen as no more than a sop to parry critics. Caring for the injured has to be maintained, but preventive measures can no longer be ignored.

What it must do is devise larger gloves filled with substances which inflict less damaging blows, and at the same time revive some of the boxing skills now so badly lacking. The board's counter-argument is likely to be that this would put British boxers at greater risk in international fights, and that overseas boxers would not want to fight in this country with such gloves. But a start has to be made somewhere.



Stricken James Murray is counted out with seconds remaining in his British bantamweight title fight against Drew Docherty in Glasgow PHOTOGRAPH: WATTIE CHEUNG

When I reported my first fights in 1946, the training methods used by boxers had hardly changed during this century: the heavy punching bag, the punchball, shadow boxing in front of a large mirror and tuition from the trainer and sparring with big gloves and a headguard.

Most of that is still part of the paraphernalia, but in recent years fighters have moved into intensive weight training with sophisticated equipment; they have added strength and greater speed to their punching. Putting those assets together causes more damage to the opponent's brain.

That danger has been magnified because the skills of boxing have declined. As a local newspaper journalist in London in the '40s and '50s my winter nights were filled by reporting amateur boxing tournaments. There were clubs in all kinds of places: church halls, missions, school premises.

In immediate postwar Britain there were no sports halls, no artifical surfaces and little open space, so young boys throughout the country learned to box. They were taught the Noble Art of Self Defence, in which avoiding being hit had almost the same value as hitting.

In the past 20 years amateur boxing clubs have dwindled and few schools now include the sport on their curriculum. Potential fighters go to a professional gym. The emphasis has shifted to greater aggression, encouraged by promotional interests which know that the crowd want their instincts fed. Most of those who watch want to see the knockout punch.

The first professional fighter I watched was George Daly, of Blackfriars, described as "the last of the mechanics". He brought artistry to boxing, through balance, nimble feet and the way he mesmerised opponents with the feint. Daly could not punch and did not have to, for he knew sufficient and applied his skills to have his arm raised as winner at the end.

One extraordinary phenomenon about professional boxing is the camaraderie it generates. All over the country there are ex-boxers' associations which meet regularly to socialise. In this sport which demands such courage the spirit of friendship runs deep. There are many former fighters, into their seventies and eighties, who boxed for a pittance and are now sad to watch their sport decline to the point where the light may be snuffed out.

Cryptic crossword by Quantum

Across

8, 10 A measure to accompany country's police HQ (8,4)
9 Bird's large victim (6)
10 See 8
11 A doctor in routine round. It involves tapping by hand (10)
12 Dull old boy has time to spend (6)
14 Stress "No" to dine at this hour? (8)
15 Not all the team exercise endlessly. One's engaged in climbing (7)
17 See soup split and take on (7)
20 Traveller's with it after a month, but worn out (8)
22,26 Some dogs change to bone stirrersl (6,8)
23 Killing made following special return (6,4)
24 Bit of wood round company emblem (4)
25 New name in cut flower. Flag? (6)
26 See 22

Down

1 Make broadcast unintelligible? Take off immediately (8)
2 Work hard at books mainly? It stands out (4)
3 Authority passed on books in meal break (6)
4 Peculiar people with time for a scrap (7)
5 Turbulent or so loud, causing pain (8)
6 Rum is not beer (10)
7 Gathered information head released as listed (6)
13 Twig structure holding up below (10)
16 Cheeky little devil tuned incorrectly (8)
18 She whirls with go, perhaps (8)
19 Painting going up inside poses difficulty (7)
21 Glossy coating of fish seen around North America (6)
22 We hear the grumble's over deposit in advance (6)
24 Floral wreaths from the fertile islands (4)

Last week's solution

R	O	S	E	B	U	S	H	■	T	O	R	E	N	T
O	■	H	■	E	■	H	■	■	■	P	■	D	■	Y
A	V	E	R	S	I	O	N	■	S	E	V	E	R	N
D	■	N	■	O	■	P	■	S	■	R	■	N	■	E
B	R	A	H	M	A	P	U	T	R	A	■	■	■	■
R	■	N	■	■	■	I	■	A	■	T	■	R	■	S
I	N	D	U	S	■	N	U	T	R	I	M	E	N	T
D	■	O	■	K	■	G	■	I	■	V	■	A	■	U
G	L	A	D	I	O	L	U	S	■	E	L	D	E	R
E	■	H	■	D	■	I	■	T	■	■	■	O	■	D
■	■	■	■	M	I	S	S	I	S	S	I	P	P	I
K	■	A	■	A	■	T	■	O	■	E	■	T	■	N
O	R	R	E	R	Y	■	W	I	L	D	F	I	R	E
N	■	N	■	K	■	■	■	A	■	U	■	O	■	S
G	R	O	U	S	E	■	A	N	E	M	O	N	E	S

Football Premiership Leeds United 0 Arsenal 3

An un-Lukic day for Leeds

Mark Redding

A BLUNDER in the 43rd minute by Leeds keeper John Lukic last Saturday tipped the delicate balance of the game Arsenal's way and lifted them to third in the table.

The sides were evenly matched until Lukic, in his 400th game for Leeds and against his old club, hoofed a clearance straight to Merson 30 yards out and the Arsenal right-winger returned the ball with interest for his first goal of the season.

With a series of clever second-half strikes, the terrible twins, Bergkamp and Wright, then ran amok leaving Leeds's leading scorer Tony Yeboah in the shade.

"They think the world of each other," their manager Bruce Rioch said. "One is louder than the other but the other's not as quiet as you think he is." Who makes the most noise at Leeds? No one was saying.

Football results

FA CARLING PREMIERSHIP: Aston Villa 0, Chelsea 1; Blackburn 2, Southampton 1; Bolton 1, Everton 1; Leeds 0, Arsenal 3; Liverpool 0, Coventry 0; Man Utd 1, Man C 0; QPR 2, Newcastle 3; Sheff Wed 0, Middlesbrough 1; Tottenham 0, Nottm Forest 1. **Leading positions:** 1, Newcastle (played 9, points 24); 2, Man Utd (9-20); 3, Arsenal (9-18).

ENDSLEIGH LEAGUE: First Division: Derby 1, Ipswich 1; Grimsby 1, Oldham 1; Leicester 1, Charlton 1; Luton 1, West Brom 2; Millwall 2, Tranmere 2; Norwich 3, Barnsley 1; Portsmouth 0, Birmingham 1; Port Vale 1, Crystal Palace 2; Reading 3, Huddersfield 1; Southend 2, Sheff Utd 1; Sunderland 1, Watford 1; Wolverhampton 1, Stoke 4. **Leading positions:** 1, Leicester (12-22); 2, Millwall (12-22); 3, West Brom (12-21).

Second Division: Blackpool 0, Chesterfield 0; Bournemouth 0, Burnley 2; Bradford C 2, Bristol Rvrs 3; Brighton 1, Swindon 3; Bristol C 4, Hull 0; Crewe 2, Carlisle 1; Notts Co 2, Rotherham 1; Peterborough 1, Swansea 1; Shrewsbury 2, York 1; Stockport 1, Brentford 1; Wrexham 2, Oxford Utd 1; Wycombe 1, Walsall 0. **Leading positions:** 1, Swindon (12-29); 2, Crewe (11-24); 3, Blackpool (12-23).

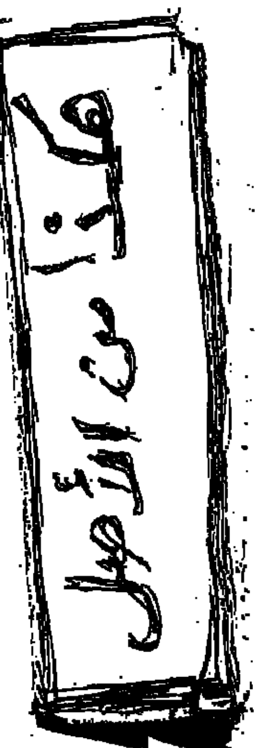
Third Division: Cardiff 1, Barnet 1; Darlington 1, Gillingham 0; Doncaster 0, Hereford 0; Exeter 0, Wigan 4; Fulham 0, Bury 0; Hartlepool 2, Scunthorpe 0; Leyton Orient 0, Chester 2; Mansfield 1, Plymouth 1; Northampton 3, Cambridge Utd 0; Rochdale 1, Colchester 1; Scarborough 0, Lincoln 0; Torquay 0, Preston 4. **Leading positions:** 1, Gillingham (12-24); 2, Chester (12-23); 3, Preston (12-21).

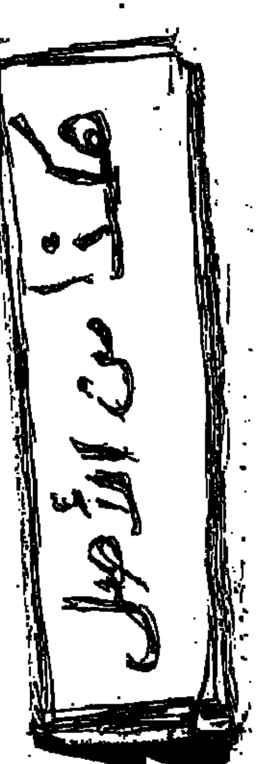
BELL'S SCOTTISH LEAGUE: Premier Division: Celtic 2, Hibernian 2; Falkirk 0, Kilmarnock 2; Hearts 4, Raith 2; Motherwell 2, Aberdeen 1; Partick 0, Rangers 4. **Leading positions:** 1, Rangers (8-21); 2, Celtic (8-17); 3, Aberdeen (8-13).

First Division: Airdrie 1, Clydebank 1; Dundee Utd 2, St Johnstone 1; Dunfermline 0, Dundee 1; Greenock Morton 2, Hamilton 0; St Mirren 3, Dumbarton 2. **Leading positions:** 1, Dunfermline (9-21); 2, Dundee (9-16); 3, Dundee Utd (9-16).

Second Division: Ayr 1, Stenhousemuir 2; E Fife 0, Clyde 0; Montrose 1, Berwick 3; Stirling 2, Queen of Sth 2; Stranraer 1, Forfar 1. **Leading positions:** 1, E Fife (9-22); 2, Berwick (9-19); 3, Stranraer (9-14).

Third Division: Albion 1, E Stirling 2; Alloa 1, Ross Co 0; Arbroath 1, Queen's Park 0 (abandoned after 75 minutes due to heavy mist); Caledonian T 3, Cowdenbeath 2; Livingston 0, Brechin 0. **Leading positions:** 1, Livingston (9-23); 2, Brechin (9-17); 3, Ross Co (9-[illegible]).





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The Washington Post · Le Monde

World leaders obey orders to snap to it

THE most powerful man in the world is called Paul Skipworth, and only John Major escaped his authority this week, *writes Martin Walker*. Better than the statutory 15 minutes of fame, Mr Skipworth of the Kodak Corporation had 20 minutes of unprecedented supreme power on Sunday morning, as 149 kings and presidents and prime ministers shuffled and squeezed and grinned to his bidding.

"Look this way," he told his own president, as Bill Clinton gossiped, turned and crossed his arms like a naughty boy in the school photo, and bent down to chat to China's vertically challenged Jiang Zemin.

Would that "lady with the prettiest smile" please squeeze along her row? And Pakistan's Benazir Bhutto complied with a look of Himalayan frost.

Would the gentleman in the dog collar please squeeze in? And the cardinal from the Holy See nestled amicably into his neighbour's African robes. Boris Yeltsin was so close to Jacques Chirac that when the Russian gave a Gallic shrug, the Frenchman's eyebrows shot up too. The group photograph of the heads of government for the 50th anniversary of the United Nations was an occasion so formal that Fidel Castro put on a suit and tie and Vaclav Havel put out his cigarette.

Yasser Arafat had grown a new inch of stubble for the big shot of all the bigshots. Only Nelson Mandela kept his sunglasses on against the massed flashlights.

Most of the front row was composed of short gentlemen, like Portugal's Mario Soares and Jordan's King Hussein. But there was no shifting the 6ft 2in Bill Clinton, president of the host nation. So like a meal passing through the belly of a python, a Clinton-sized bump snaked back through all rows of the commemorative photograph.

But some were missing from the line-up. Egypt's President Hosni Mubarak was unavoidably detained, and so was Georgia's Eduard Shevardnadze. Helmut Kohl had other Bratwurst to fry. And John Major, one of the five men in the world who can veto UN business, was also absent from the one international forum where Britain remains a great power.

Mr Major finally arrived in New York on Sunday afternoon. Being Mr Major, the first thing he did when he got to New York was go to the public library. But he was not left alone to browse, because Bill Clinton had invited all the other 148 leaders to a black tie dinner of welcome.

Or not quite all. Iran, Iraq, Cuba, Sudan, North Korea, Libya and Somalia were snubbed. "There are a number of nations whose invitations got lost in the mail," a senior US official said. "The dog ate them. Woof."

Summit view: Presidents Clinton and Yeltsin relax at the Roosevelt home during talks over Bosnia. *Story, page 8* PHOTO: STEPHAN SAVOIA

Debt worries spoil UN celebrations

Martin Walker in New York

BRITAIN and France both demanded that their American ally pay its debts to a reformed United Nations, agreed on the need for an enlarged Security Council, and then clashed over which of them was the leading provider of peacekeepers at this week's celebration of the world body's 50th anniversary.

"The United Kingdom is the largest contributor of troops to UN peacekeeping operations — British forces are serving in blue berets from Angola to Georgia, with over 8,000 in Bosnia alone," boasted the Prime Minister, John Major.

"France has confidence in the UN," said the French president, Jacques Chirac. "France has always been in the front rank of the search for peaceful solutions to the crises of our time — from Cambodia to Bosnia, she has become the first contributor of troops to the United Nations."

Neither speech won much applause from the UN's 50th anniversary general assembly on Monday. The audience was irritated that France insisted on continuing its nuclear-test programme in the South Pacific, and that Mr Major lectured them about housekeeping just like Margaret Thatcher used to.

Mr Major spoke in generalities, of a Security Council that "should be enlarged" — but he did not say with whom. By contrast, Mr Chirac said firmly that Japan and Germany should be brought in, "and some great states of the South".

At least Mr Major and Mr Chirac — representing two of the five countries with the right to a veto at the Security Council — had attended. Europe put on an undistinguished show with Germany's chancellor and Italy's president both staying away.

For Mr Major and Mr Chirac, the real significance of the UN assembly was what took place outside.

For Mr Chirac, the dogs that refused to bark in the night were the leaders of Japan and Algeria — who decided not to meet him.

For Mr Major, there was no business like oil business. His meetings with Kuwait, Saudi Arabia and Azerbaijan were all oil-related. And so was his long-awaited meeting with Argentina's president, Carlos Menem, who hailed the agreement to share oil-exploitation rights around the Falklands. The two leaders tentatively agreed that Mr Menem would visit London, depending on a continued improvement in relations.

Much of the air went out of the UN meeting with the departure of the US president, Bill Clinton, and Russia's president, Boris Yeltsin, for their own private superpower summit. As the two biggest debtors to the UN, they missed a chorus of complaints about their arrears. The US owes £800 million, and the Russians more than £300 million.

"It is not sustainable for member states to enjoy representation without taxation," complained Mr Major, but named no names.

Mr Chirac was more blunt: "The temptation of disengagement threatens the very existence of the UN. It is not acceptable that many countries, most notably the biggest of all, let the debts mount up."

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End of empire, page 33

Colin Powell 'to run for president'

GENERAL Colin Powell is expected to launch an all-out bid to become the first black president of the United States next month with a formal declaration that he will seek the Republican party's nomination to challenge Bill Clinton for the White House in 1996, *writes Jonathan Freedland in Washington*.

Republican sources said on Monday that the Gulf war hero, former chairman of the joint chiefs of staff, and now best-selling author, was set to make his move as early as November 11 — Veterans' Day.

Gen Powell's entry into the race would transform the political landscape and give the Republicans a better-than-even chance of dashing Mr Clinton's confident re-election hopes, the sources said.

"If I had to bet today on one person for the Republican presidential nomination, I'd put my money on Colin Powell," said Bill Kristol, the top Republican strategist and now editor of the conservative Weekly Standard.

Gen Powell's anticipated candidacy — now regarded in Washington as a racing certainty — has dismayed the frontrunner, Senator Bob Dole, and other declared Republican candidates.

The party's upper echelons increasingly view Gen Powell as a saviour, and are convinced the retired general will declare before November 23.

A Powell bid to capture the Republican nomination would also damage severely a new attempt by Ross Perot, the Texan billionaire, to thrust a third-party candidate into the White House, the sources said.

Austria	AS30	Malta	45c
Belgium	BF75	Netherlands	G 4.40
Denmark	DK18	Norway	NK 18
Finland	FM 9.50	Portugal	E300
France	FF 13	Spain	P 275
Germany	DM 3.50	Sweden	SK 17
Greece	DR 400	Switzerland	SF 3.30
Italy	L 3,000	Thailand	60 Baht

By jingo, it's Britain's new defence policy

MICHAEL PORTILLO, in his speech at the Conservative party conference ("Portillo waves the right flag", October 22), demonstrates that he is very new to his job as Secretary of State for Defence. He appears to have overlooked the fact that for almost half a century the great bulk of Britain's armed forces have been assigned to an international command, Nato; and it would have been the dominant partner in that alliance, the US, which would, in fact, have decided "when to fight and when not to fight".

No member of Nato, nor of the European Union, is proposing "a single European army", controlled by the European Commission; but in both the North Atlantic Alliance and in the European Union, governments, including our own, are rightly trying to find a way by which the defence policies and forces of the European members of the Alliance and of members of the European Union can be better organised to face together the security problems of the future. Nothing is more important than to ensure that France plays a full part, as, unfortunately, she does not in Nato now. It is absurd to suggest that Britain can act alone.
Lord Carver,
(Chief of Defence Staff, 1973-76)
House of Lords, London

MR PORTILLO is panicking unnecessarily. The only conceivable possibility of the British army being run from Brussels arises from British membership of the North Atlantic Alliance, the headquarters of which is, of course, in Brussels. Is Mr Portillo advocating that we follow the example of General de Gaulle, set 38 years ago, and withdraw from the integrated military structure of the Alliance?
Sir Michael Palliser,
(Former chairman of the Council of the International Institute for Strategic Studies), London

Canada beats US health-care

CANADA has only about one-tenth of the population of its southern neighbour. The numbers alone mean that the United States has a bigger health-care system, many more hospitals and, to borrow the Pythonesque phrase, huge numbers of "machines that go ping".

It's no surprise, therefore, that Washington Post writer Anne Swardson ("Canada's health-care system ails", October 15) found a Canadian doctor frustrated with our smaller health-care system who opted for the relatively bigger vista south of the border. What she won't find in Canada, however, are tens of millions of people without medical cover because of lack of income and tens of millions of others relegated to third-class medical treatment through government-sponsored schemes.

In the US, major health-care decisions are made behind closed doors by flinty-eyed accountants working for private insurance companies. The Canadian system isn't perfect, but at least virtually everyone has access to a reasonable quality of care. Canada's system is accountable and subject to public review. The inevitable choices regarding all elements of the health-care system — hospitals, doctors, community health centres, prevention and wellness, pharmaceuticals and the range of treatment options — are made in a democratic manner. I don't always trust elected officials, but when it comes to decisions regarding my medical care, I'll take democracy over private profits every time.
Michael Shapcott,
Toronto, Ontario, Canada

DON'T trust any government at any time — politicians are a rum bunch of connivers who get where they are by scheming. The ones who come out with the truth are usually put out to pasture pretty quick.

Britain without the NHS? Look to the US for not how to do it. The private medical insurance companies charge exorbitant premiums, doctors are salesmen frightening patients into bank-breaking treatments while paying high insurance premiums themselves, in case anyone sues them. In Britain private medical insurance premiums are high enough but nothing like the US's.

Value what's good about the welfare state and don't abuse it. But human nature being what it is it's likely to kill a good thing. It would be a crueller place without the NHS — something Britain should not forget.
Tudur Wynn-Jones,
Polk City, Florida, USA

Baby trade brought to book

WE ADOPTED our daughter from Paraguay in March 1992 ("Boom trade in babies", October 22). Her birthmother, aged 15, was a bright girl from a middle-class family. She was desperate to resume her education and put the pregnancy behind her.

The lawyer we used was an international patents lawyer who charged a fraction of the vast sums quoted in the article. The birthmother had to appear in court several times before Judge Patricia Blasco (mentioned in the article as investigating the illegal baby trade) in order to verify she understood what she was doing. She was separately represented by a government-appointed guardian and also had to undergo counselling with a court-appointed psychologist.

We then had to apply to the Department of Minors to authenticate the adoption before we could get the baby a passport and bring her home.

I now face the prospect of taking my daughter to nursery in the knowledge that some may think we paid £15,000 to have her snatched from the arms of her loving mother.
Andrew and Claire Astachnowicz,
London

BABY SALE and smuggling were confused throughout the article with legal adoption. The latter is described as "trade" while legal costs of adoption are referred to as the "price" of a baby, which they are not. The chief judicial investigator is reported as believing that only 30 per cent of babies are given up voluntarily: the rest of his comment is to the effect that, given the social conditions in Paraguay, the remaining 70 per cent of mothers who give up babies do so under pressure.

This does not mean, as the article implies, that 70 per cent of adoptions are illegal. Deciding to give up your baby because you are poor or single is sad but it is not the same as having your baby stolen.
Kay Bernstein,
London

The changing faces of Arafat

JIM HOAGLAND'S depiction of "Arafat's chameleon qualities" (Washington Post, October 11) says it all. Arafat's recent infatuation with the US was best summed up when he ended his delivery on September 13 1993, at the White House addressing the US president, with these words: "Thank you, thank you, thank you."

This is a bizarre hypocritical expression of gratitude to the president of the US, whose country's active political, economic and military support enables Israel to enact the dispossession of Palestinians and to possess the bullets that maimed their men, women and children.

In his toadyism to Israel, Arafat has legitimised its occupation of Palestinian land, in return for the "authority" he has been granted to play the role that Anton Lahad plays for Israel in South Lebanon. In essence, his role in Gaza and Jericho, and the new "Arafatstans", is simply to protect the Israeli occupiers from the wrath of the occupied and humiliated Palestinians. He is now doing Israel's dirty work by imprisoning and torturing those who offend Israel. The new "Oslo II" "redeployment" — not withdrawal — of Israeli forces is a continuation of the same process; continuing occupation, expropriation and humiliation for the Palestinians.
(Dr) Ismail Zayid,
Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada

THE Washington Post section (September 17) featured prominently a story of armed men in Israeli army uniform, who terrorised the Palestinian township Halhoul, broke into homes and killed one young man as his father watched, helpless. The Israeli army says its men were not involved and that Jewish extremists may be the killers.

Subsequent investigations have shown that a gang of Palestinian robbers, dressed up in army uniforms, speaking Hebrew among themselves, raided five homes and shot and killed a Palestinian in one of them. Three have been arrested. This outrage cannot thus be laid at the door of Jewish extremists.
Michael J Berger,
Jerusalem, Israel

Fisticuffs over boxing

CONSENTING adults should be free to do whatever the hell they want to themselves and to each other, as long as they don't hurt non-consenting bystanders, despite what your back-page story says ("Noble art caught in the money trap", October 22).

The world might well be a nicer, gentler, more caring place if young men's bodies wouldn't keep on producing that nasty old testosterone. But in the meantime, I'd rather they pummelled each other than me.
Alan Paterson,
London

I'D LIKE to see a simple graph of the number of serious injuries or deaths in boxing per number of participants (professional and amateur) over time. I'd also like to see similar graphs for other dangerous sports, including rugby and motor sport.
Peter Braunberger,
Sheffield

Briefly

THE FAILURE of the UN conference to ban landmines (October 22) beggars belief. To ensure success next time, may I suggest the following to concentrate the minds of those responsible? During any future conference the delegates' children and spouses should be flown to Mozambique. They should be taken into the countryside and left in an area of mined bush. How many of the children and spouses would have to have their legs blown off before a decision was reached to ban these foul and indiscriminate weapons?
James Oglethorpe,
Maputo, Mozambique

YOUR editorial ("The comfort of strangers", October 8) states: "Today both in Korea and the Philippines the US co-operates with the bar owners and in medical checks of bar girls." In fact, all US bases in the Philippines are now closed. However, reports indicate that prostitution, and presumably "sexual imperialism", continue to thrive, even in the absence of US servicemen. Your writer seems to have slipped while ascending the moral high ground.
John Provo,
Reitaku University, Chiba, Japan

CORINE LESNES reports (Le Monde, October 15) that Australians have taken to French bashing. All the Australians are doing is "saying things about the French they wouldn't dare say about the Jews or the Chinese", while what the French are doing is exploding massive nuclear bombs in a foreign country. Call me thick-skinned, but I'd rather be called names than have nuclear bombs exploding in my region.
James M Bucknell,
Brooklyn, New York, USA

IT'S GOOD to chuckle over Saddam and his "unanimous support" referendum. So very different from our own democracy, which offers a very real choice between all views (rather than just virtually identical supporters of the status quo), the election undistorted by persuasion, soundbite TV manipulation, monopoly control of the press and TV, or misleading advertising campaigns, and all followed by clear responsive government carrying through its manifesto. How terrible not to be born British.
Don Hoskins,
London

THERE seems to be some confusion over the difference between policy and operational matters within the prison service. Mr Howard, however, appears to be quite clear on this. If something goes right then that's policy and he takes the credit; if it goes wrong then that's operational and someone else is to blame.
(Dr) M N Perkins,
London

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Russia drawn into Bosnia peace plan

Martin Walker in New York

AN OMINOUSLY vague agreement to secure the participation of Russian troops to implement a peace in Bosnia was reached on Monday between President Clinton and President Boris Yeltsin during their private summit at Hyde Park, away from the United Nations 50th anniversary gathering in New York.

The two leaders agreed in principle to incorporate Russian troops, but left their respective military staffs to work out how and where this could be done — without bringing them under Nato command, without granting the Russians their own zone in the region, and without reducing them to semi-civilian status as service and support personnel.

"Russian military forces will participate in these operations, but how they do it is an affair for the military, not for two great presidents of great powers," an ebullient President Yeltsin told a press conference later, going on to talk with animation of the strengthening Russian-American partnership.

"We discussed some specifics on which we were in accord, and some which we are leaving to our defence experts. So we have agreed to say nothing here, not to make their job any harder than it already is," said Mr Clinton.

Back in New York, top Bosnian, Serb and Croatian officials joined Britain's John Major and France's President Jacques Chirac in a frantic huddle to find out just what sort of superpower deal they had been roped into. There was no immediate clarification.

The agreement was reached at Franklin Roosevelt's old family home at Hyde Park, redolent with memories of the wartime alliance against fascism. Presidents Clinton and Yeltsin sat in the same chairs that Roosevelt and Churchill had used 55 years earlier. It proved an intoxicating brew for Mr Yeltsin, who said he was moved by the "presence of the persona of Roosevelt".

It was not clear what exactly had been agreed, beyond the profuse expressions of cordiality by Mr Yeltsin, and what sounded like a joint pledge to press China to join the other nuclear powers in a comprehensive test ban treaty next year, after France completes its controversial round of testing.

"With the faith of two great presidents like us, all our faith is getting stronger that there should be no disagreements between our two countries, that our partnership will be strengthened. We move into the future so there will be no war, or only minimal ones," Mr Yeltsin said, at the unexpected joint press conference.

Grinning with a mixture of pleasure and embarrassment at Mr Yeltsin's bombastic style, President Clinton brushed off sceptical questions from the press as to whether the deep differences between Russia and America on Nato enlargement and Nato's military assertiveness in Bosnia could be so easily resolved.

"You underestimate the presidents of two such great powers," interrupted Mr Yeltsin, as Mr Clinton weighed his words.

Under the agreement, Russia "is enabled to play an honourable and responsible role in a vital issue of European security" without subordinating its troops to Nato command, Russian sources said on Monday.

The meeting was the last chance for the two leaders to meet before the US-sponsored peace talks between Bosnia, Croatia and Serbia begin next week at a US air force base in Ohio. There are hopes of an agreement that would trigger the deployment of a Nato intervention force.

John Palmer adds: Western governments are engaged in intense diplomatic efforts to find a successor to Willy Claes, the scandal-tainted Nato secretary general, after he resigned last week with a bitter public denunciation of the Belgian legal system.

Nato foreign ministers, in New York for the United Nations' 50th anniversary celebrations, are expected to pick a successor from a shortlist of candidates headed by Ruud Lubbers, the former prime minister of the Netherlands.

In an emotional farewell press conference at Nato headquarters in Brussels, Mr Claes protested that he was innocent of any complicity in the alleged payment of bribes totalling nearly £2.5 million by Italian and French defence firms when he was Belgium's minister for economic affairs in the late 1980s.

The bribes were allegedly paid to the Flemish socialist party, and there has never been any suggestion that Mr Claes benefited personally.

Mr Claes denounced the way in which the Belgian parliament had handled his indictment for corruption and fraud by the country's supreme court. He said his defence had been given little time to answer the charges he faced. He had not been allowed to confront those accusing him of involvement in receiving bribes from the Italian helicopter manufacturer Agusta, and the French firm Dassault, which makes Mirage jet fighters.

"In what other democratic country in Europe would these procedures be possible?" Mr Claes said. "They are unworthy of a modern state based on a constitution and the rule of law. Although I am an angry man, I do not want to become a bitter man, in spite of the injustices which I have experienced."

Nato diplomats watched sombrely as Mr Claes, the Atlantic alliance's first secretary general to be forced to resign, made an impassioned defence of his integrity. Some confided that they shared the feelings of President Clinton, who said Mr Claes had "provided great leadership" during his 12 months as Nato's chief.

But with the alliance completing plans to send 60,000 peace-enforcement troops to Bosnia, and struggling to manage renewed tensions in its relations with Russia, western governments are determined to avoid any political vacuum in Nato.

Washington Post, page 15

Kenya clashes leave 5 dead

Greg Barrow in Nairobi

ETHNIC clashes erupted in Kibera, one of Nairobi's large slums, last week leaving at least five people dead.

Local people said paramilitary police shot dead at least one person, after entering the slum to quell the violence. Residents complained that the police's heavy-handed actions had served to further terrify the community.

For a number of days, Kibera became a battleground between youths from the Nubian and Luo tribes. Gangs armed with axes, clubs and machetes chased opponents, hacking to death anyone they caught.

"This is a very, very serious matter," said one Luo spokesman. "To me this is the beginning of what promises to be the worst ethnic clashes in Kenya."

The rioting began after the mutilated body of a Nubian youth was found in a Luo area of the slum. The incident created tension between the two groups and quickly degenerated into violence along tribal and political lines.

Police beat a man in Nairobi's Kibera slum PHOTOGRAPH: SAYYID AZIM

In Kenya's highly tribalistic political scene, Nubians have traditionally supported the governing Kanu party of President Daniel arap Moi, while Luos, who are the second largest ethnic group, have sided with the opposition Ford Kenya party.

A large contingent of paramilitary police armed with automatic rifles and long wooden staves managed to control the clashes. The police drew a cordon along a railway line which had been the frontline of the battle. Behind the police lines, market traders sifted through their looted stalls, while schoolchildren peered inquisitively into the burnt-out shells of houses.

"This is not the end of it," said one Luo slum dweller. "We'll start again when the police go. There are still many scores to be settled."

Gadafy threatens more expulsions

Ian Black

COLONEL Muammar Gadafy, the ageing *enfant terrible* of Arab politics, is threatening to deport more than 1 million African workers, in a move driven by an economic crisis, domestic unrest and international isolation.

After losing a bruising battle with the United States, Britain and France to take up a seat on the United Nations Security Council, Libya has now been told that the ban on all flights — imposed because of the Lockerbie bombing affair — will not be lifted for the repatriation of "illegal infiltrators".

Col Gadafy, who seized power as a young man in 1969, faces economic problems due more to mismanagement than the UN sanctions imposed to force him to hand over the two men accused of bombing Pan Am flight 103 in 1988.

He recently ordered the expulsion of thousands of Palestinians — ostensibly to expose the "sham" of the Israeli-Palestine Liberation Organisation peace agreement. Hundreds of Palestinians are still camping in harsh conditions on the Libyan-Egyptian border.

Now Col Gadafy has turned his attention to migrant workers from Egypt, Sudan, Chad, Mali and Niger, drawn to Libya, some illegally, some seasonally, by relatively high wages. They are the focus of popular resentment which Col Gadafy is exploiting.

Last week the UN sanctions committee rejected a request to allow the more than 2,200 flights Libya said would be needed to send home 1,067,000 people living in the country "without residence permits".

Diplomats say Col Gadafy was motivated, in part, by resentment against neighbouring governments which bowed to intense western pressure to deny him one of the Security Council's non-permanent, rotating seats.

Israelis hold their fire after Hizbullah killings

Derek Brown in Jerusalem

ISRAEL lashed out at Syria and Iran last week, accusing them of helping the Islamist guerrillas who killed nine Israeli soldiers in south Lebanon earlier in the week.

But the Israeli government, apparently under strong pressure from Washington, indicated that there will be no major military retaliation.

After an unscheduled meeting on how to respond to the killings — and to Israeli public outrage — the cabinet said it had given the army "freedom of action" for its operations against Hizbullah, the Islamist guerrilla group responsible for the deaths.

Israel usually retaliates quickly when it suffers casualties in Lebanon, with air raids and shelling of suspected Hizbullah positions. That may still happen, but the cabinet statement clearly tried to divert some responsibility for the latest tension from Hizbullah.

"The cabinet condemns the government of Iran which directly aids the Hizbullah terrorists, and denounces the government of Syria which, although it is capable of doing so, does not prevent but rather gives backing to the terrorist activity of this organisation," the statement said.

The Hizbullah leadership is known to have close contacts with the government in Tehran, which Israel says is the guerrillas' main paymaster and arms supplier. The relationship with Damascus is more tenuous, but most Israelis believe Syria, with 35,000 troops in Lebanon, could snuff out the Hizbullah menace if it wanted.

Public anger in Israel is running high — a mood not soothed by reports that the Lebanese defence minister, Mohsen Dalloul, had described the guerrilla attacks as "superb".

Senior Israeli officers and government ministers insisted there were no constraints on operations against Hizbullah. But they also stressed there could be no clear-cut military solution.

Yitzhak Rabin, the Israeli prime minister, said Syria had apparently encouraged Hizbullah in the hope of forcing Israeli concessions in the stalled peace negotiations. That, he told Israel radio, was a grave mistake.

The relatively muted Israeli response to the deaths of nine of its soldiers is almost certainly the result of forceful intervention by the United States, which has been urging all parties to the conflict to act with restraint

Nicholas Burns, the state department spokesman, hinted last week that Washington had appealed to Israel to hold its fire in Lebanon. "I suppose that we've had conversations with the Israeli government," he said.

The Clinton administration is eager to notch up another Middle East peace deal, after Israel's US-sponsored deals with the Palestinians and Jordan. But the Israel-Syria talks are hopelessly bogged down.

Although Warren Christopher, the US secretary of state, has postponed the attempt to break the negotiating impasse, he is clearly anxious to prevent hostilities in Lebanon leading to a final rupture of the process.

Mickey Kantor, the US trade representative, had more success last week when he announced a free trade agreement with the Palestinian self-rule authority headed by Yasser Arafat, chairman of the Palestine Liberation Organisation. The deal will allow Palestinian goods into the US without customs duty.

● Amnesty International has accused Israel of "playing with words" in drafting legislation that ostensibly outlaws torture but which the London-based human rights group says effectively legalises it in interrogation.

Washington Post, page 15

The Week

A RENEWED attack on secret law-making by the Council of Ministers has been launched after the European Court in Luxembourg upheld the Guardian's claim that it was unlawfully denied the minutes of ministers' private debates.

Comment, page 14

PRESIDENT Henri Konan Bedie urged the people of Ivory Coast to support him after his election victory, but the opposition said many had heeded their call to boycott the poll. He claimed to have won more than 90 per cent of the votes.

MORE than 870,000 black men took part in the Washington march and not the 400,000 estimated by police, according to an independent analysis by Boston University's Centre for Remote Sensing.

Where were you, sisters? page 31

THE president of a Russian bank, Mikhail Zhuravlyov, was shot in the head and critically wounded in Moscow in the latest attempted contract killing.

COMMONWEALTH governments are paying far too little attention to human rights and democratic values, the Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative warned in an attempt to set the agenda for next month's Auckland summit.

MORE than 800 inmates have died in Kenya's prisons so far this year, the country's parliament was told.

THE Malawian government has frozen the bank accounts of the ousted dictator Kamuzu Banda, his lawyers said.

MEXICAN police said they had arrested Fernando Yáñez Muñez, the alleged "number two" of the Zapatista rebel movement, in Mexico City.

THE HEAVILY populated south-west of China has been rocked by an earthquake measuring 6.4 on the Richter scale.

A CHINESE nuclear submarine suspected by Moscow of spying collided with a Soviet submarine off Vladivostok in June 1983 and sank with all 70 crew abroad, according to a report of the secret incident.

NEW DELHI imposed direct rule on the populous and politically important Indian state of Uttar Pradesh after its Dalit chief minister lost her support in the state assembly.

Raid hits 'untouchables', page 9

DON CHERRY, one of the most prominent figures of the jazz avant-garde of the late fifties and early sixties and a member of the Ornette Coleman Quartet, has died aged 58.

Thousands flee Colombo bombs

Suzanne Goldenberg and Reuter

TAMIL TIGER saboteurs carried out a devastating attack against the Sri Lankan government's military machine last week, blowing up two oil depots in the capital in a string of explosions.

At least 25 people were killed in a gun battle between the bombers and security forces at one of the oil installations, and the government imposed a curfew to prevent revenge attacks against Colombo's Tamil minority.

Military headquarters said 20 soldiers were killed in the gun battle at the Kolonnawa depot with Tiger saboteurs, who included members of the Black Tiger suicide squads. Five guerrillas are also believed to have died.

"Four attackers arrived in a lorry, overpowered guards and planted explosives on the tanks. One of them blew himself up," said H M G B Kotakadeniya, deputy inspector-general of police.

Huge fireballs lit up the sky as thousands of tons of oil were destroyed in the blasts, which wiped out two huge tanks at the main storage depot outside Colombo, and at the smaller Orugodawatte installation a mile away.

Residents heard about eight explosions, but it was uncertain how many were caused by bombs and how many by burning fuel.

The value of the tanks destroyed is estimated at £6 million and the destroyed oil is worth about £12 million, said Anil Obeysekere, chairman of the Ceylon Petroleum Corporation.

Thousands of terrified residents fled the area despite appeals on state radio and television not to panic. Many camped in the streets, or took refuge in temples or with relatives. Troops fired in the air to chase away looters who began ransacking abandoned houses.

The intense heat of the blazes kept firefighters from approaching, and columns of smoke illuminated by the blaze rose into the night sky and spread through the neighbourhood.

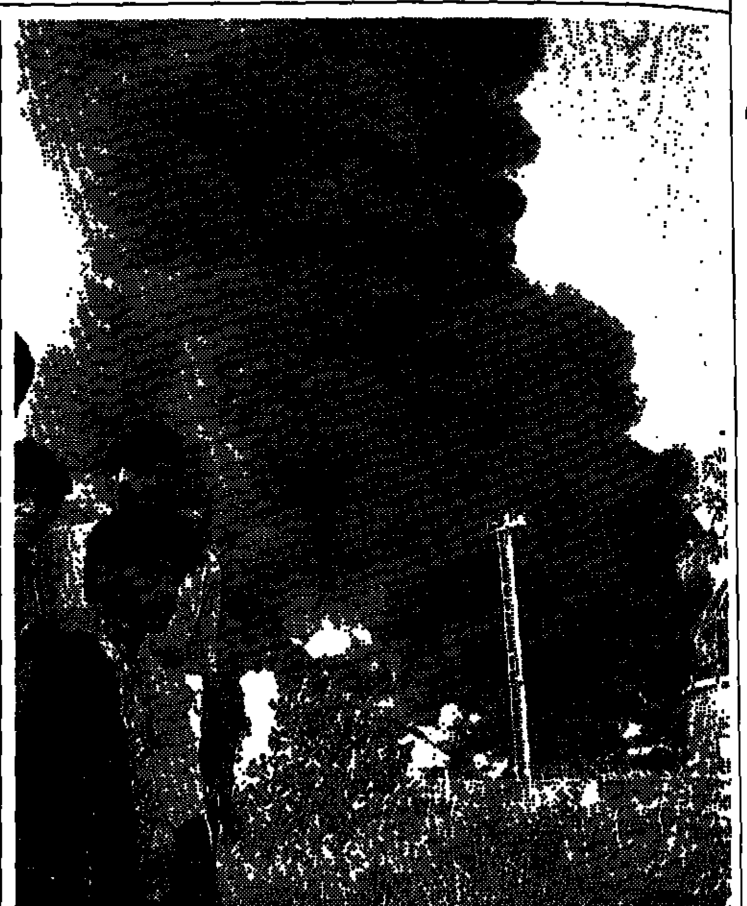
The daring strike by the Tigers is bound to raise questions about security at the country's most vital installations.

Military officials feared that the loss of two of the country's three oil installations could affect air support for the government's latest offensive on the Jaffna peninsula, Operation Sunshine.

Ten thousand troops have been sent to the north in what has been described as the beginning of a final push to defeat the Tamil Tigers, who have been waging a war of secession since 1983.

The offensive is designed to force the rebels into negotiations on the government's most recent peace plan, a proposal for constitutional reform that would devolve significant powers to regional governments.

Sri Lankan army columns advancing on the Tamil guerrilla-held north have linked up after a big battle and are poised for a final assault on the rebels' prized city of Jaffna, diplomats said on Tuesday.



Fire alarm . . . Smoke billows into the Colombo sky after oil depots were bombed by the Tamil Tigers PHOTOGRAPH: DEXTER CRUEZ

After the battle with the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) on Sunday, three divisions combined into a single force of several thousand troops just three miles from the city, one diplomat said.

"We can expect the attack on Jaffna city after a few days to secure Colombo from guerrilla attacks," the diplomat added.

But the military, which launched the offensive on October 17 to recapture rebel territory in the north, was cautious. "In the near future, we might take Jaffna (city), I can't tell you exactly when," a military spokesman said.

An assault on the city would mark a decisive phase in the 12-year war between the army and LTTE rebels, fighting for an independent homeland for the island's Tamil minority in the north and the east.

More than 50,000 people have been killed in the war since it began in 1983.

Deadly start to Algeria poll

Lamine Ghanmi in Algiers

SECURITY forces searched for Muslim rebels responsible for two car bombs that killed 10 people and wounded more than 80 as Algeria's disputed presidential election campaign got off to a violent start.

Sunday's bombs and weekend killings, in which five peasants had their throats cut and two men were gunned down, came as President Liamine Zeroual cancelled planned talks in New York with the French president, Jacques Chirac.

Algerian newspapers said Mr Zeroual, one of four men standing in the election that Muslim fundamentalists have vowed to wreck, had strengthened his hand by putting Paris in its place. Omar Belhouchet, editor of El Watan, said: "He scores marks with Algerian opinion in which nationalism is still very touchy."

Algeria's presidency spokesman said Mr Zeroual called off the talks because the "persistency of one-sided attitudes . . . created a situation in which the contemplated meeting between the Algerian and French heads of state has lost its *raison d'être*." Statements in France over the talks were "a blow to the dignity and sovereignty of the Algerian people."

In New York, Mr Chirac claimed that Mr Zeroual cancelled the meeting because the French president rejected a joint photographic session. — *Reuter*

Junta curbs Suu Kyi role

Nick Cumming-Bruce in Bangkok

THE Burmese authorities have restricted the political activity of the Nobel peace laureate Aung San Suu Kyi, four months after releasing her from six years' house arrest, by rejecting her reappointment as general secretary of the National League for Democracy.

Earlier this month the NLD restored her to the post she occupied before her arrest and in which she led it to a landslide election victory in 1990. The government refused to recognise the results of the election.

The reappointment was seen as a veiled challenge to the State Law and Order Restoration Council (Slorc). Its leaders said after releasing her that they would consider starting a dialogue with her, but now they seem intent on keeping her to the political sidelines. A senior official said that there was no need for Slorc to have a dialogue with anyone while debate continued on drafting a new constitution.

The NLD was forced to drop Ms Suu Kyi from the job in 1991 to retain its political party status after Slorc introduced regulations prohibiting parties from keeping members who faced charges by the state.

A member of the government's election commission, said her reappointment was illegal under rules requiring the commission's approval of leadership changes.

Paris endorses nuclear treaty

Guardian Reporters

FRANCE and the United States joined Britain last week in announcing that they were endorsing a nuclear-free zone in the South Pacific — but only after the French complete their current tests.

The decision to sign three protocols of the 1985 South Pacific Nuclear Free Zone treaty are aimed at defusing widespread anger in the Asia-Pacific region at France's resumption of nuclear tests at Mururoa atoll in French Polynesia.

The protocols prohibit stationing, testing and stockpiling nuclear weapons in the area, but do not affect transit rights.

The next Mururoa test could be scheduled for early November if France maintains its four-week pattern. That would place it just before the Commonwealth summit in Auckland, New Zealand, which is due to run from November 10-12.

Britain expects a mauling at the summit for its tacit endorsement of the French testing. In hope of preventing that, it has been urging France to hold off further tests until the summit ends.

All five of the world's main nuclear powers — the United States, France, Britain, China and Russia — have pledged to sign a comprehensive test ban treaty by the end of 1996. Russia and China have already signed the South Pacific protocols.

In New Zealand, where opposition to French testing has been the most strident, the prime minister, Jim Bolger, said his country had been urging the remaining three to sign the protocols for years.

But a spokesman for Greenpeace, Michael Szabo, told the New Zealand Press Association that he was concerned France and Britain had timed the announcement simply to ease international pressure on the two countries.

In New York, President Jacques Chirac said on Monday that France would probably carry out four more nuclear weapons tests in the South Pacific, fewer than initially planned.

Asked how many more underground tests Paris planned to conduct, Chirac said: "Probably four, and it will be ended next spring."

France has carried out two controversial tests, at Mururoa and Fangataufa atolls, since early September.

Monday's statement suggested Paris will stop at six in an apparent acknowledgment of the scale of international anger.

Mr Chirac said that while many world leaders had condemned French nuclear testing publicly, few had criticised him privately. President Bill Clinton had not raised the issue with him, he said, and John Major and German Chancellor Helmut Kohl had been supportive.

On Tuesday, the European Commission president, Jacques Santer, said there no grounds for taking France to court over its nuclear tests. "The tests under way in French Polynesia do not pose a perceptible risk of significant exposure to workers or the population," he told the European Parliament.

Quebec referendum too close to call

Jonathan Freedland in Montreal

A CAMPAIGN once derided as a dull march toward stagnation and status quo suddenly came alive this week, as the people of Quebec entered the closing days of a debate over a proposed "velvet divorce" from Canada.

In the final run-up to the October 30 referendum on independence, pollsters declared the vote — Quebec's second in 15 years — too close to call. Dormant for months, with most experts predicting a repeat of 1980's No vote, the struggle between federalists and separatists dramatically ignited with a late pro-independence surge, allegations of racism and sexism, a leadership shuffle and a rebellion by aboriginal Québécois.

The man credited with the latest rally for the Yes camp is Lucien Bouchard, the charismatic leader of the Bloc Québécois faction in Canada's House of Commons — and now the official leader of the opposition. His knack for street-talk and his populist stump manner had long made him the best spokesman for those who believe the mainly French-speaking Quebec can only truly pursue its destiny alone.

In recognition of the fact, Jacques Parizeau — Quebec's prime minister and official separatist head — all but ceded the leadership to Mr Bouchard earlier this month.

Now it is left to the younger Mr Bouchard, aged 56, to ring out the time-honoured Québécois slogans, like Maitres Chez Nous — masters in our own house. "What a lovely phrase," says Mr Bouchard telling rapt audiences that the coming vote is "fundamentally a question of self-confidence". Standing tall, despite losing a leg 10 months ago to a flesh-eating disease, Mr Bouchard seems a witness to his own rhetoric.

Put plainly, the separatist message has been: You can have your cake and eat it, too. "Sovereignty" — the preferred term — will not deprive Québécois of their Canadian passports, their citizenship, or even their Canadian currency. They can keep everything as part of a new, negotiated arrangement with the federal state, separatists argue. Voting Yes will simply strengthen the hand of the chief negotiator — one Lucien Bouchard.

The federalists condemn their opponents as disingenuous at best. They insist that Quebec would become like any other foreign country; that the cost of disentanglement will be steep, that taxes will rise and jobs will be lost. They say that Quebec will not be guaranteed immediate membership of Nafta, the North American Free Trade Agreement in which the United States and Mexico are partners. The economic consequences of break-up, they warn, will be dire.

"Terms of divorce can be discussed," said Canadian finance minister Paul Martin. "Terms of a remarriage, of an economic union, never."

Few French Canadians, however, appear to be hearing these stern warnings. One poll found that 32 per cent of Québécois believe they would send representatives to Ottawa even after voting yes to independence.

For many Québécois the debate has the aura of *déjà vu*. More than 30 years have passed since Charles de Gaulle emboldened separatists by declaring "Vive Le Quebec Libre!" and yet independence still remains a yearning Québécois cannot seem to shake off. "Nationhood is still worth the risks," says Suzanne Anctil, aged 19, studying medicine at the University of Montreal. "We have a character that is very different from English Canadians."

At the root of the movement is the feeling that the original French settlers were never given their due as one of the two founding peoples of the 128-year-old Canadian federation. Instead, they were dominated by the English speakers of Ontario, and Canada's eight other provinces. The bitterness is still on show in Quebec's number plates, which carry the slogan Je Me Souviens — I Remember.

But federalists say the threat to Quebec's Francophone heritage has receded, the language is entrenched, and the province has real power. Canada's prime minister, Jean Chrétien, is a Québécois as were predecessors Brian Mulroney and Pierre Trudeau.

Three possible trip wires remain for the Yes camp. Mr Bouchard blundered last week when he told a mainly female audience that Quebec had suffered from too low a birthrate. "We're one of the white races that has the fewest children," he said. Critics seized on the remark as a Hitlerite suggestion that Quebec women's duty was to make children for the homeland and that the only Québécois who counted were white.

A second threat is posed by the province's tiny native population of Cree Indians and Inuit, or eskimos. Non-French speaking and desperate to remain part of Canada, the Indian nations — who lay claim to territory the size of France — say they will pursue a legal challenge to any attempt to break off from Canada, following a referendum of their own.

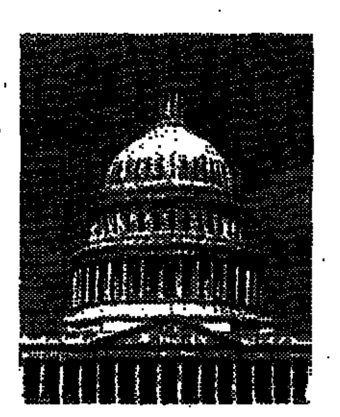
The final problem for the separatists is history. Polls before the 1980 referendum also said the two sides were close. In the end, the federalists won by a 60-40 margin.

David Crary in Toronto adds: President Jacques Chirac of France says he will recognise Quebec if the province secedes from Canada. In an interview on CNN's Larry King Live on Monday, he was pressed by Larry King on the recognition issue. "If the referendum is positive, the government will recognise the fact," Mr Chirac said. Asked if that meant France would recognise Quebec under those conditions, Mr Chirac replied: "Yes."

Meanwhile fears that the separatists could win the referendum have sent Canada's financial markets reeling. The Canadian dollar, which traded last week at nearly 75 US cents, tumbled to just under 73 cents on Monday. The Toronto Stock Exchange also experienced its biggest one-day fall.

Many financial analysts predict economic upheaval if Quebec votes to secede, including a further plunge for the Canadian dollar, higher interest rates, and a possible exodus of businesses from Quebec. — *AP*

Clinton refused right to bear arms



The US this week

Martin Walker

BATTLE is joined at last, between a White House that has finally drawn the line and the most radical Congress in memory, intent on destroying the old liberal welfare state in order to erect a conservative opportunity society in its stead. Or perhaps not. This is the Clinton presidency, after all, whose grip on political principle sometimes recalls the late, lamented Soviet Union; a place where nothing was legal but everything was possible.

No wonder President Clinton gets on rather well with Boris Yeltsin, with whom he enjoyed another summit this week. They took time off from the United Nations jamboree to head upriver to Hyde Park, the old home of Franklin Roosevelt. The symbolism — of Roosevelt as the father of the UN and the wartime ally of the Soviet Union — was a little forced. But Yeltsin had done his bit at his last press conference before leaving Moscow. As the cameramen snapped away, Yeltsin gave a tweak to the back of a female secretary, and most US newspapers front-paged the photo of her eyebrows shooting into affronted orbit. The men in the Kremlin and the White House evidently have more in common than we thought.

Each man has trouble with his elected parliamentary body, each faces a budgetary crisis, each is having trouble delivering on commitments to help enforce a Bosnian peace agreement, each is the subject of humiliating allegations about his personal life, and each faces a difficult presidential election next year.

Still, Clinton finally took his stand against the Republican revolution, promising to veto the bill they passed to reform the Medicare health system for the elderly, and to veto their "tax-cut" budget that he said would, in fact, raise taxes for most families. "I will not let you destroy Medicare. I'll veto this bill to protect the people of the United States," Clinton said, appealing to the Republicans to "think again", in a rare press conference at the White House. "I won't let you raise taxes on working families."

The president went on to cite a new report from the Republicans' own congressional committee, which admitted that more than half of all taxpaying families would see their taxes increased by the Republican budget, despite a promised new $500 tax credit for each child. American households earning less than $30,000 a year, which account for 51 per cent of all taxpayers, would end up paying more because the Republican budget dismantles the Earned Income Tax Credit system, which gives tax refunds to the working poor.

"These bills undermine our values, to support families, to support work, to care for our seniors," Mr Clinton said, blaming "the extreme conservative wing" of the Republicans in Congress for forcing the long-awaited confrontation between White House and Congress.

Clinton also appealed again for the Republicans to save the US Treasury, and the global financial system, from the looming repayments crisis, by raising the national debt ceiling and permitting the Treasury to honour its obligations to pay out $25 billion in interest on the debt next month.

The national debt is bumping up against the legal limit of $4,900 billion on the national debt, but Republican congressmen are refusing to raise the limit unless Clinton buckles to their demand that he pass their budget, which seeks to eradicate the federal budget deficit within seven years. After a similar appeal from the Federal Reserve chairman, Alan Greenspan, who warned that a US Treasury default could have "catastrophic" consequences for the global finance system, Speaker Newt Gingrich and Senator Robert Dole were last week seeking a compromise. But rank-and-file Republican congressmen threatened to revolt, determined to use what they call "this atom bomb for the financial system" to force Clinton to their will.

Locked in a series of bitter rows on domestic issues, Clinton looks to be in severe trouble over his promise to send 20,000 US troops to help enforce a peace agreement in Bosnia. Despite sending his secretaries of state and defence, and the Pentagon's chairman of the joint chiefs of staff to four congressional hearings last week, he has won no new support. "I have yet to meet a single member of either party who has been convinced by the administration's briefings so far," Gingrich commented.

Although the president can deploy the troops to Bosnia on his own authority as commander-in-chief, he needs congressional authorisation for the estimated $1.5 billion the peacekeeping mission would cost. The possibility of getting Islamic countries to help finance the operation, as they did the Gulf war, would still leave the White House in the political plight of risking US lives in an operation condemned by Congress.



There are, in effect, two competing US foreign policies, an essentially isolationist one from the Republican Congress, and a traditionally interventionist US leadership role now pressed by Clinton. But congressional control of the budget imposes constraints on the president's ambitions. The US owes $527 million to the United Nations in annual dues, and another $907 million for its share of the peacekeeping budget, with little prospect of Congress paying up.

This did not deter Clinton. He proudly opened the 50th anniversary session of the United Nations in New York this week, to symbolise his conviction that he has become a true foreign policy president by reasserting US leadership in Bosnia, Haiti and Middle East. But as Clinton then left for his summit with Yeltsin, the other 149 world leaders gathered at the UN were entitled to reflect that Clinton's achievements have been secured mostly by humiliating the UN and then using it for his own ends.

A sad contradiction lay at the heart of the UN's 50th birthday party. On the one hand, never have so many countries gathered together to celebrate the UN, and to re-endorse the original UN Charter. On the other hand, the UN has never been so broke, nor so discredited for its failed missions in Bosnia, Somalia and Rwanda, nor so drowned in demands for fundamental reforms.

And the business of the UN, as usual, took second place to the high-level summitry occasioned by the UN's anniversary. Clinton's meetings with Yeltsin and China's Jiang Zemin were the most closely-watched events of an extraordinarily intense 72-hour burst of international diplomacy. And while Clinton and Yeltsin discussed Russian anguish at plans to enlarge Nato, Russia's economy and revisions to the Conventional Forces in Europe Treaty, the Nato countries were politicking hard over a replacement for Willy Claes as Nato's secretary-general. With Nato poised to undertake in Bosnia its first full-scale military operation, this was not a good moment to lose such an effective figure, particularly over squalid allegations of corrupt payments by Italian arms exporters into Belgian party funds.

Ironically, Clinton's congressional embarrassments come just as he can claim to have overcome the sneers at his accident-prone early handling of foreign affairs. A new Middle East peace agreement between Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organisation has been signed in the White House, and American diplomacy and US-inspired air strikes have brought a Bosnian ceasefire and the tantalising prospect of a peace deal. Clinton can boast of taking a justified risk to send US troops to restore democracy in Haiti. He also claims much of the credit for the Northern Ireland ceasefire, and his aides are twisting British and Irish arms hard to secure all-party talks by the time the US leader arrives in Belfast at the end of next month.

And while America's preventive diplomacy wins few headlines, the governments of India and Pakistan, and of Greece and Turkey and Macedonia, know how much US pressure was applied to prevent their disputes from boiling over into open confrontations. But all of what US state department veterans wearily call "global management" has been classic and traditional bilateral diplomacy, in which the UN has usually been carefully circumvented. At the same time, the UN has never been so subservient to US foreign policy interests, from giving up its role in Bosnia to maintaining the economic embargo on Iraq.

Having angrily blamed the "dual command" complication of the UN for his initial embarrassments in Somalia and Bosnia, Clinton has in fact relied on the international body to bail out his foreign policy commitments in Iraq and Haiti. And despite a promised year of rugged Nato peacekeeping, the UN will stay in Bosnia, still charged with maintaining the essential humanitarian mission.

This ambiguity in Clinton's approach to the UN is characteristic of the presidential candidate who in 1992 talked grandly of a permanent UN peacekeeping army, but then in his first year warned the UN general assembly that "for America to say Yes, the UN must learn to say No". That warning led directly to the UN's reluctance to meet the challenge of mass slaughter in Rwanda. Nor does the UN get much credit, in the US or elsewhere, for its achievements, such as the peacekeeping jobs in Angola, Mozambique and Cambodia.

THE endless succession of five-minute speeches from heads of states and prime ministers over three days in New York paid much lip service to the UN's work. And there were dutiful calls for a reform of the anachronistic UN power structure which gives the real authority to a security council run by the five great powers of 1945.

These calls will ring somewhat hollow, since Chancellor Helmut Kohl of Germany, one of the nations with the strongest claim for security council membership, did not even bother to turn up. He sent instead a blunt message that no German troops will be available for the Bosnian peacekeeping force. Since Germany bears much responsibility for unleashing the Balkans wars with its insistence on recognising the independence of Croatia and Slovenia in 1991, this is not helpful, and only fuels congressional complaints about US troops being sent to keep a European peace.

The one consolation for Clinton is that his opinion polls show him comfortably beating any Republican rival so far on offer. This may not last. Retired General Colin Powell is looking more and more like a candidate in waiting. He has been musing about how he could heal America's racial divide, after the O J Simpson trial and Louis Farrakhan's Million Man March on Washington. After being rather rude about Gingrich's Contract With America, Powell has been reconsidering.

"I think the Republicans have shown a great deal of energy in trying to solve the nation's problems, and I support most of the elements of the Contract With America," he said last week. He has even spoken kindly of the good intentions of the Christian Coalition. Powell's son tells his friends that he is sure his father will run. Worried conservatives rightly fear that the essentially centrist Powell would do to the Gingrich revolution what George Bush did to the Reagan revolution — smother it with kindness.

Blue empire's decline, page 23

Dietary indiscretion ends in jail sentence

Ian Katz in New York

IN HEALTH-OBSESSED 1990s America, the penalties for nutritional incorrectness are frequently severe. But few have paid as dearly for their dietary indiscretions as Arthur Younkin.

Younkin, the 45-year-old ex-owner of a Wichita slimming salon, weighs 229kg. He was last week sentenced to 93 days in jail. His crime: failing to heed a judge's order that he lose a "substantial" amount of weight.

The subject of Younkin's weight first became a matter of judicial concern after he admitted going on an $11,000 spree with somebody else's chequebook.

Judge Clark V. Owens II placed him on probation and ordered him to refund the stolen money, but Younkin fell behind with the restitution payments because he could not keep a job.

Summoned once more before Judge Owens, Younkin claimed his weight prevented him getting a job. But instead of lifting the restitution order the judge sent him to a halfway house, where he was limited to a diet of 1,200 calories a day. After he shed more than 22kg, Judge Owens ordered his release on condition that he continue to lose weight.

But the judge repeatedly received phone calls from local people who had spied Younkin tucking into buffet dinners or cream-filled cookies.

Last Friday, Judge Owens, who once weighed in himself at 104kg, sentenced Younkin to a three-month prison term for failing to obey his slimming order.

Younkin, who turned down an offer from a New Jersey freak show to settle his restitution debts in exchange for his services, says he has been the victim of discrimination. "There's no justice in the world for heavy people," his wife, Sandi, told the Wall Street Journal.

Whites seek to buy privileges

Privatisation is replacing segregation in South Africa. **Chris McGreal** reports from Steynsburg

THE tennis courts are not much to fight over. The asphalt is worn and bumpy; tufts of grass dot the surface and the nets are limp. Most of the time Steynsburg's windswept courts are deserted. Yet there is a fight of sorts.

Next week the black majority in the Eastern Cape town is expected to put the African National Congress in control of the council in South Africa's first all-race local elections. It is a scene likely to be repeated in towns and cities across the country.

But Steynsburg's black-controlled council will inherit less than its all-white predecessor, which has sold off or helped dispose of many of the public facilities. White councillors say it was done for financial reasons. Blacks suspect an effort to maintain a form of segregation.

The country club, old-age home, main school and tennis courts have been privatised. Only the country club has opened its doors to blacks, and then just two. Other facilities remain lily-white. But Steynsburg has changed. In some respects the dilapidated, mainly Afrikaans-speaking farming town of about 2,000 whites and six times as many blacks has come a long way.

A year ago, the law forced the old white council to form a joint transitional administration with the neighbouring black township of Khayamnandi. Steynsburg now has a black mayor. Thami Raqa, deputy headmaster of Khayamnandi's school and the ANC's principal election candidate, says power-sharing has been salutary for all. "Our first meetings were very tense, but as time went by they have compromised. Attitudes have softened and we understand each other better."

Yet real power has remained in the hands of the white councillors. Mr Raqa believes they want integration on their terms by permitting blacks into formerly white preserves as long as they remain a minority.

Whites control use of the once-public tennis courts, sold by the council to a private club for just 800 rand (£145). Councillor Alan Cumming, a candidate for "Steynsburg First", which draws together moderate whites and unreconstructed advocates of apartheid in common alliance against the ANC, says it is a "blatant lie" that council assets were sold to "protect" them from blacks.

"We were approached by the club to repair the courts . . . To have the five courts resurfaced was over 14,000 rand (£2,500). Do we spend that for 25 residents? We sold it to these people and they have to do the maintenance," he said.

The courts have yet to be repaired. While Mr Cumming says that only 25 residents use them, so does the whites-only school. Mr Raqa says membership fees preclude blacks from playing. The head of the club declined to discuss the matter.

The latest battle centres on council land that houses the country club, golf course and bowling green. White councillors, who are mostly members, subsidised the club by exempting it from rates and taxes. Now they are trying to sell the grounds to the club for just 1,000 rand (£180). Mr Raqa suspects it is to prevent the facilities being thrown open to public use. He believes the deal is illegal because it was never discussed by the council.

"They are afraid of the non-racialism that is coming and they think these things should be owned by whites. But people are protesting against the privatisation of the white school," he said.



Still on top . . . whites at Steynsburg's school, run as a private company. No blacks have been admitted PHOTOGRAPH: MIKE KNOTT

Khayamnandi township's first real school was built only three years ago, as apartheid was being buried. This week 49 black children are the first to sit their matriculation exams in Steynsburg. But Khayamnandi's school is badly overcrowded with 825 pupils, twice as many as it was built for.

A mile away, the formerly state-run white school came close to shutting for lack of pupils. It has just 105, including one in a class all on his own. Central government gave parents a choice: open to all or go private. Led by white councillors, they chose the latter.

Mr Cumming says they did not privatise the school to exclude blacks. But he makes it clear that white parents want control: "This is the new South Africa, but I still protect what's mine. To maintain western principles, Christian culture, Christian norms, we are particular about who is allowed into the school." There is not a single black child at the private school.

Poor drown in toxic waste

Phil Gunson in Sierra Blanca

SCHEMES to dump nuclear and toxic wastes in small hispanic and Indian communities in Texas are provoking accusations of "environmental racism" on the part of United States authorities against politically impotent peoples.

With one of the planned radioactive waste sites just 16 miles away from the Mexican border — in the predominantly hispanic Texan town of Sierra Blanca — the Mexican government has come down on the side of environmental activists, and is accusing Texas of treaty violation.

In the 1983 La Paz agreement the United States and Mexico committed themselves to avoiding activities that would damage the environment or threaten the health of communities within 60 miles of the border.

The US authorities contend that neither the planned nuclear dump nor the huge existing sewage-sludge dump at Sierra Blanca poses a hazard to health. The Mexican government, however, is afraid that water sources used by both countries will be contaminated.

It is because Sierra Blanca is poor and 70 per cent of its people are Mexican-Americans that Texas wants to bury its low-level radioactive waste there, argues the environmental campaigner Richard Boren.

The town (pop. 700) was founded in 1881, the year a silver spike was hammered in to mark the meeting of the Southern Pacific and Texas Pacific railroads. Nowadays the Amtrak trains only stop by special request, and the boarded-up shops reflect the poverty of a community whose median income is less than $8,000 a year.

"The lives of poor Mexican-Americans are just not worth as much as affluent white people in this country," Mr Boren says.

Bill Addington, a third-generation resident and the leading opponent of the dump, says that is why the town already has the world's largest sewage-sludge dump.

Since 1992 a company called Merco Joint Ventures has been spreading 225 tons of New York City sewage sludge a day on a 128,000-acre ranch on the outskirts of town. Although opposed by the county authorities, the dump was approved by the state in a record 32 days, without a public hearing.

Hector Villa of the Texas Natural Resources Conservation Commission (TNRCC), which approved the project, says the sewage is beneficial to the land and does not need a waste permit. The TNRCC will also decide whether to license the radioactive waste dump.

"You can see how people start to feel powerless when the same agency will be licensing a radioactive waste dump and they never even asked us how we felt on the sewage sludge dump," Mr Addington says.

Merco has refused to let local people take samples of the sludge, but Mr Addington says the New York department of environmental protection admits that it contains high levels of lead, mercury, copper and other metals. "If it was such a good resource, they'd be spreading it on the fields up there instead of shipping it 2,000 miles to west Texas," Mr Boren says.

Damaso Luna, head of the Mexican foreign ministry's environmental department, says his government has been sending diplomatic notes on the subject since March 1992. "We haven't always received answers."

One of the prime concerns about dumping radioactive waste is the level of seismic activity in the area. Opponents say that an earthquake is possible on any of the region's fault scarps and that damage to the containers would allow radioactive isotopes to pass into the groundwater and eventually to the Rio Bravo, which forms the border.

The project is one of more than a dozen planned dumps which have aroused concern in Mexico that, in the words of Mr Luna, there is a "deliberate policy" of placing them in the border region, where communities have little political clout.



Spitting image . . . Maori warrior Tame Iti vents his anger at the annual commemoration of the 1840 Waitangi Treaty between Britain and tribal chiefs (below right) PHOTOGRAPHS: POPPERFOTO/HULTON DEUTSCH

Once more are warriors

A new generation of Maoris is fighting to end what they call the sham of equality, writes **Andrew Higgins**

AWAY from the graffiti-scarred, crime-cursed ghetto of south Auckland, as fetid a dumping ground as any Indian reservation in the United States, stretches New Zealand State Highway One. After miles of urban sprawl, the road enters a sublime rural landscape moulded over millennia by volcanoes, and winds down alongside the turbid, treacherous waters of the Waikato river. Here, once, were warriors — a Maori past only dimly remembered in the warpaint tattoos and gang rituals of Auckland housing estates. It is a lovely spot, surrounded by the farms and handsome homes of the whites — known as Pakeha — who annihilated the last Maori fighters (and appropriated their war dance for the All Blacks rugby team).

The Maoris made their last stand along the Waikato river over a century ago. Today a new generation of angry militants, galvanised by what happened here and less respectful than traditional tribal elders, want back what they have lost. The mood is summed up in a new anthem of rebellion, a recording of rap music by a Maori band called Upper Hutt Posse: "Fuck New Zealand, ya call me a Kiwi, Aotearoa is the name of the country."

"For too long cowboys have been making decisions for the Indians around here. We've been behaving for 150 years. It got us nowhere," said Kalani Kai·Tarawa, a former building labourer turned political campaigner. "Now we're in your face, and everyone knows about us."

Like many young Maoris, he grew up speaking only English. When he was laid off work he signed up for a Maori language course at Auckland university, a hotbed of Maori militancy: "My father had his mouth washed out with soap at assembly for speaking Maori at school. I have had my heritage stolen from me. They took my language. Now I have to come here and pay money to reclaim my own birthright." He also joined a Maori rights group called Te Kawau Maro, named after the attack formation of a 19th century warrior chief, Rewi Maniopoto.

Under attack is the core of New Zealand statehood — the belief that Maori and European form a single nation. An increasing number of the Maoris see this ideal, rooted in the Waitangi Treaty of 1840 between Britain and tribal chiefs, as a sham. Instead of a single country, united by intermarriage and rugby, activists want separate Maori sovereignty. Beyond demands for the return of stolen tribal lands, details of what this might mean are vague. The passions behind it are not.

Among whites, who make up at least 85 per cent of the population, a backlash has already begun. A book portraying pre-colonial Maoris as bloodthirsty savages has become a best-seller. Entitled The Travesty Of Waitangi: Towards Anarchy, it defends the rape of Maori land and derides a renaissance of Maori language and culture. Newspaper letter columns and radio phone-ins bristle with racial polemics.

Earlier this month, in a conflagration that shocked the nation, a fierce fire ravaged what was perhaps New Zealand's most potent symbol of ethnic harmony — a 147-year-old "Maori cathedral" built by an Anglican missionary and a revered Maori warrior. Arson is widely suspected.

Such is the ugly mood the Queen will confront when she visits New Zealand early next month. As sovereign, she will sign a New Zealand act of parliament offering Maoris a formal apology for past misdeeds: "The Crown expresses its profound regret and apologises unreservedly for the loss of lives . . . the devastation of property and social life."

But no contrite words will cure the ills afflicting what has become an impoverished Maori underclass — unemployment (up to 90 per cent in parts of south Auckland), chronic alcoholism and brutal domestic and street violence. There is no shortage of explanations for what went wrong. Demographers cite an uncontrolled post-war Maori exodus to the city and the arrival of cheap labour from Pacific islands; economists blame the crash of the late 1980s; psychiatrists claim to have diagnosed a uniquely Maori form of depression called *whakamomori*.

The root of what is referred to coyly as the "Maori question" lies off State Highway One. History books record what occurred here in the last century as the Maori or Land Wars. When General Cameron led imperial troops and settler militiamen against a tribal confederation of the Waikato king, in violation of the Waitangi Treaty, Maoris coined their own term: *Raupatu* — "one hundred club blows." It is tepidly translated as "confiscation".

Less than two hours by car from the beer halls, dole queues and other bleak landmarks of urban Maori life spread the well-tended grounds of what used to be the Hopuhopu Army Camp, a cluster of wooden barracks and neat rows of officers' bungalows. It serves as HQ of the Tainui Trust, an assembly of four tribes that has cut a deal with the government. After five years of negotiation, the biggest of them, the Waikato, will soon receive land and cash worth NZ$170 million (£70 million).

COMPARED with what other tribes have been given in compensation for past expropriation, the offer is generous. Overnight the Waikato will become a major New Zealand corporation, freehold landlords to the Hamilton municipal police station, a former air force base, Waikato university, a shopping mall, and scores of other properties. Compared with what the tribe lost in the first place, however, the settlement is miserable. It will get back a mere 3 per cent of 1.2 million acres confiscated after the 1863 invasion.

The Waikato's chief deal-maker is Bob Mahuta, the adopted brother of the Maori Queen, Dame Te Atairangikaahu. "Our deal is a compromise. It is far from perfect," he explained over a lunch of oysters, a small luxury befitting his new status as a Maori tribal tycoon. "Politics is about the possible, not the impossible."

Critics say he sold out. "What would happen if New Zealand applied the same principle to international debt?" asked Derek Fox, a prominent Maori broadcaster and magazine editor. "Sorry, we're a bit short of the readies, so we'll pay you three cents in the dollar. They would never say this to foreign banks, but they have no qualms about saying it to their own people."

When the war ended in 1865, defeated Maori warriors retreated crying defiantly: "Friend, I shall fight against you for ever and ever." But the challenge seemed forgotten as New Zealand prospered, Maoris and Pakeha intermarried, and old grudges faded. But the dim ancestral memory of stolen lands and old wars has returned with a vengeance.

"Something has changed. Maoris want a say in their own lives. We are very cynical about the whole democratic process," said Margaret Mutu, a lecturer in Maori studies at Auckland university. ". . . Maoris feel left out and left behind. It is a very dangerous, very explosive situation. It won't take much to spark open violence."

Violence against property has already begun. It started in October 1994 when a Maori firebrand called Mike Smith tried to cut down one of the most cherished totems of white authority. Early one morning he climbed atop Auckland's One Tree Hill and attacked an aged pine with a chainsaw. Police arrived before he could finish the job. All the same, Mr Smith has become a celebrity of radical chic Maoridom.

Still more disturbing for white New Zealand were the protests that followed four months later on New Zealand's national day. Ceremonies marking the occasion, known as Waitangi Day after the 1840 treaty, had to be scrapped when demonstrators gate-crashed a gathering of Maori elders, government officials and foreign diplomats. The Queen's representative, Governor-General Dame Catherine Tizard, was shouted down, spat at, and, in a final flourish of traditional disrespect, confronted with bare tattooed buttocks.

A month later, Maori radicals stormed a 108-year-old schoolhouse in Takahue. Claiming it stood on stolen ancestral lands, they occupied the building for nearly half a year before setting it ablaze last month when police moved in to evict them. It was the government itself, however, that probably provided the spark for this sudden bushfire of protest. In a clumsy attempt to close the book on Maori land claims, it announced a lump sum cash offer of NZ$1 billion as final payment for past plunder. Even moderate tribal elders were insulted.

The one thing nearly all New Zealanders can agree on is the importance of the Waitangi Treaty, revered, as sacred covenant. Some of the most militant Maoris are lawyers. The treaty is only three paragraphs long, but interpreting what they mean has spawned a booming industry of legal and academic exegesis.

BOTH Maori and Pakeha politicians refer to it constantly — and disagree with equal frequency on what it means. Complicating matters is the existence of two separate, sometimes contradictory texts, one English, the other Maori. The treaty's basic message seems to be this: Maoris agreed to grant Britain overall sovereignty in return for a guarantee of "undisturbed possession" of land and resources by themselves.

"There was a deal, but the deal has been broken," said Hone Harawira, the mastermind behind a string of Maori protests. "If you buy my car but don't give me any money, I'd expect to get the whole car back, not just the hub caps. All Maoris are getting now is hub caps."

Most white New Zealanders see scant connection between the broken promises of the last century and the rage of Maoris today. In Hamilton, a prosperous farming town in the heart of what were once the Waikato tribal lands, a riverside plaque proudly celebrates Cameron's invasion: "Erected in honour of the pioneers of 1864 . . ." Moored nearby is the boat that carried the first British soldiers and settlers down the river.

More sensitive custodians of local history have put up a notice board offering a more politically correct version of events. It is the semantic squirm of a guilty, or at least confused, conscience.

"Our city fathers don't like to be reminded that they are sitting on confiscated land," said Pare Hopa, a local Maori activist. "It makes them feel uncomfortable."



Where unelected gurus call the shots

Suzanne Goldenberg

BAL THACKERAY, lord of all Bombay, brags that he does it by remote control; the godman Chandraswamy does it through spiritual guidance; and the widowed Sonia Gandhi does it with dignity, through the most discreet channels. All over India unelected figures, free of all accountability to the voter, are pulling the political strings.

Mr Thackeray, who founded the Hindu extremist Shiv Sena party but has spurned elected office, likes to remark that the chief minister in his state of Maharashtra — where a Shiv Sena coalition rules — dances to his tune.

But apart from the publicity-seeking Mr Thackeray, India's Rasputins shun press scrutiny and profess to have little interest in politics.

Chandraswamy, the Hindu guru being investigated by the police for fraud and connections with underworld figures, has emerged as the ultimate political fixer. Under the guise of religion, he has enjoyed unparalleled access to senior political figures and claims a 24-year friendship with PV Narasimha Rao, the prime minister.

In the south, extra-constitutional figures have had a mixed run. In the state of Tamil Nadu, Sasikala Natrajan — an unofficial consort — is honoured with a place on the stage alongside J Jayalalitha, the chief minister, at public gatherings. But now Sasikala is accused of using this association to indulge in land-grabbing and financial irregularities.

When N T Rama Rao, chief minister of Andhra Pradesh, decided to employ his wife, Lakshmi Parvathi, as his personal secretary, he was overthrown and she was savaged in the press.

Sonia Gandhi is too sacred a personage to meet such a fate, although her dislike of the prime minister encouraged a bruising party rebellion in May. As long as she stays silent on whether she intends to enter politics, she continues to exercise a spell on the Congress (I) Party, which views her as the embodiment of the family's political legacy.

In the years after independence, it was regarded as unseemly for Indian politicians to sponsor friends or relatives in political life. But those reservations vanished in the 1970s when Indira Gandhi, the late prime minister, began grooming her son Sanjay to replace her. Sanjay, who died while piloting his plane, was given a free run during the Emergency.

Mrs Gandhi also began patronising religious gurus in the 1970s, and politicians eager to win her favour followed suit.

But in the past five years, the process of making the personal political has spread beyond New Delhi's ruling circle. This growing influence of extra-constitutional figures corresponds with the sense of drift in all the main parties in India.

Apart from the film star politicians of the south, no party can count on a charismatic figure to pull in votes. So in a rapidly changing world in which their own political futures seem uncertain, politicians have abandoned partnerships built on ideology for those based on family ties or spiritual attachment.

The middle classes, dismissing politicians as corrupt time-wasters, are finding new heroes in technocrats, crusading civil servants whose efforts to cut red tape have cost them their jobs. It's a disturbing scenario in the country that proudly calls itself the world's largest democracy, with general elections just months away.

Raid hits the 'untouchables'

KODIYANGULAM, Tamil Nadu, a tidy village of white-washed houses and red-tiled roofs, has always been an inspiration. Once it was a symbol of what hard work could accomplish; now it is a monument to what envy will destroy, *writes Suzanne Goldenberg*.

The villagers of Kodiyangulam in south India, all Dalits (Oppressed), or so-called untouchables, were known for miles around for their prosperity. Nearly every one of the 350 families has sent a man to work in north India or the Gulf, changing their fortunes for ever.

But all that changed on August 31, when the villagers claim they were assaulted by hundreds of rampaging policemen, who poisoned their well and destroyed the possessions accumulated over a lifetime of hard work.

"Twenty years our people have worked abroad and now everything is ruined," one woman, Shunmugusardari, said. "Everything in our house has been looted."

The police say they were looking for arms caches, and that Kodiyangulam was the nerve centre of caste warfare between Dalits and the upper-caste Thevar community. "They provoked the police in the hope that police would fire back and some people would be killed and they could cry police atrocities," said Sunil Kumar Singh, the district police chief who led the raid.

But villagers and local activists say Kodiyangulam was attacked to punish Dalits for becoming too "uppity". Tradition dictates that Dalits work the fields of the Thevars. But with Gulf jobs and affirmative action schemes, the Dalits were no longer willing to submit to servitude.

The villagers say the raid has convinced them money cannot insulate them from caste prejudice. Untouchability is still practised in the deep south of Tamil Nadu, where they are barred from temples and must drink from different glasses at tea shops.

One response has been increased Dalit militancy. Scores of buses have been burnt since the raid, and upper-caste villages have been attacked.

The Dalits are also seeking refuge in Islam, arguing that conversion offers them the only chance of dignity. "Money we can earn. Wealth we can accumulate. The one thing we cannot get is respect," said S Thangaswamy, a Dalit human rights lawyer in nearby Tirunelveli.

Since the raid, Kodiyangulam has become a place of pilgrimage for Dalits from surrounding villages.

From angry young man to old devil

OBITUARY
Sir Kingsley Amis

SIR KINGSLEY AMIS, comic misanthrope of British letters, author of the ground-breaking novel Lucky Jim, and cantankerous regular at London's Garrick Club, died on Sunday, aged 73.

Amis leapt to fame in 1954 at the age of 32 with his first book, Lucky Jim, which has been described by some as the funniest novel in the English language.

During the course of a long and prolific writing career, Amis transformed himself from savage observer of class-ridden post-war Britain in Lucky Jim into a crusty Colonel-Blimp figure, who later came to represent many of the attitudes he had once attacked.

His achievement as a novelist tended to obscure his very considerable accomplishments as a poet. Amis was, in fact, a fully subscribed member of that increasingly rare species, the all-round man of letters. His style was rich, acute and fastidious, and unmistakably his own.

Amis's output was prodigiously large as well as various: 24 novels, more than a dozen collections of poetry, short stories and criticism and a large miscellany of other work.

It was a perverse measure of his standing that, although he was knighted, Amis received no honorary doctorate from any university, unlike his friend, the poet Philip Larkin, who notched up half a dozen. Amis was not much admired in academic circles, where he was seen as having committed several vulgar errors: he was popular, he was politically incorrect, he wrote too much.

Amis's wit, shrewdness and verbal dexterity, his ability to turn quite unexceptional characters and situations into something very much larger and more memorable, the sheer pleasure of reading him — with regular breaks in which to bawl with laughter — will ensure that he is read when more fashionable writers are forgotten.

In art as in life, Amis was unable to conceal his feelings. If he was bored, he showed it in a frown and if he was amused he laughed hugely. His books reflected his current preoccupations, whatever they might be. As a result his fiction tracks closely changes in the morals and manners of his times, from Lucky Jim Dixon's hapless fumblings in the mid-1950s to the permissiveness of the 1960s and the uncertainties beyond. As a moving picture of middle-class relations between the sexes in the second half of the 20th century, his novels are unmatched. But they also track change that was going on inside Amis himself. Early Amis heroes may not have thought much of their jobs or their bosses, but they certainly had an appetite for pleasure, especially in women. The later novels are full of a sense of disintegration and disillusion, with women especially. Taken as a whole, the sequence of his novels reflect with remarkable clarity the movement in Amis's own feelings as he moved from youth to age.

Amis was by then a fully committed conservative who, for example, admired almost everything about Lady Thatcher except her treatment of the universities.

Amis's prime motive in moving to the right from the communism of his youth was his detestation of communist tyranny, something he thought post-war intellectuals far too easily ignored. But there remained a strong thread of continuity in his beliefs and attitudes, deriving from his lower middle class origins in south London. Much of the world appeared to be dominated by snobberies and exclusivities which Amis came to detest, in literary no less than social or political affairs.

Amis was, at the same time, powerfully attracted by popular culture, the films, jazz, detective stories and science fiction that competed for his attention during his childhood in the 1930s.

Literature at first seemed to be the possession of the traditional upper class. Later, it appeared to have fallen into the hands of another class, of professional pseuds and poseurs of all kinds who fenced themselves off behind obscurities and so kept ordinary people at a respectfully admiring distance.

Latterly Amis rarely read anything new that could be described as "literary" fiction. Even the much acclaimed novels of his son Martin were more glanced at than read. Thrillers were more acceptable because they had old-fashioned strengths, like plots and characters. And they were not boring, to Amis almost the worst thing in literature or people.

Amis was born in south London, to Peggy and William Amis, a mustard manufacturer's clerk employed at Colman's office in the City. As an only child Amis was both cosseted and ordered about. Perhaps as a result, in his early teens he began to suffer from the anxieties and panic



Sir Kingsley Amis two months ago, when his last novel, The Biographer's Moustache, was published PHOTOGRAPH: DAVID SILLITOE

attacks that were to dog him intermittently all his life. He suffered bouts of "depersonalisation" — a feeling that he was no longer there — and came to fear travelling in lifts or underground trains or being left at night in an empty house.

He went to the City of London School on the Thames at Blackfriars where he found the education both rigorous and liberal. Amis won an English scholarship to St John's College, Oxford. Soon after he went up in 1941 he met Philip Larkin, with whom he formed the most important friendship of his life. Larkin gave Amis detailed advice on his first novel, Lucky Jim, but Amis did not ask for his help with a novel again.

Nor did they much discuss literary matters. He believed the business of a novelist was to write novels, not talk about them. Their influence on each other was mostly indirect: when writing they would have the other as invisible audience whose approval each most wanted.

Amis's second world war army job was to organise signals traffic and he saw no action at first hand. But the army enlarged his understanding of people and the world. Idealism in politics was no longer enough since all around him he saw men relentlessly pursuing their own interests. When Amis returned to Oxford on early release in 1945 he was no longer the communist he had been when he left, though he did not vote for a Tory government until 1970.

In 1946 Amis met the 17-year-old Hilary (always Hilly) Bardwell, a model at the Ruskin School of Art, in an Oxford coffee-shop. She became pregnant, they married and Philip was born in 1948. In 1949, with a first to his credit, Amis became a lecturer at the university college in Swansea.

His first serious attempt at a novel, The Legacy, was turned down by several publishers, but his second, Lucky Jim, was welcomed by Gollancz. Its publication in 1954 was a great success, winning a Somerset Maugham Award, and thereafter Amis's literary reputation was rarely in doubt. He became identified with literary movements — the Movement and the Angry Young Men — but he never saw these as much more than labels pinned on him by journalists in search of trends. In 1961 Amis left Swansea for a fellowship at Peterhouse College, Cambridge. He came to think of his years in Wales as the happiest of his life and in the 1980s and 1990s always went back to Swansea when his beloved Garrick Club closed in the summer.

But Amis stayed in Cambridge only two years, finding university social life unbearably formal and his teaching load enjoyable but, if properly done, too engrossing to leave enough energy over for writing. He resigned and rented a house in Majorca — Robert Graves would be a near-neighbour — where he planned to write full-time for a year.

AMIS started an affair with the novelist Elizabeth Jane Howard. This was far from the first affair he had got involved in since marrying Hilly, but it was the first in which he openly took the other woman away with him on holiday.

When he returned he found that Hilly had taken the children — there were now three, Philip, Martin and Sally — off to the house in Majorca. Amis rejoined Howard in London and stayed with her, and when he and Hilly were divorced they married. They were at first romantically happy but after a few years the marriage began to disintegrate. In 1980, Howard "bolted" — her own word.

Amis did not like being left alone in his large house in Hampstead and his sons came up with an alternative. Why did he not establish a new home with Hilly and her third husband, Lord Kilmarnock? They were short of money, he of company; it made sense. The household — like something out of an Iris Murdoch novel, as Amis would say — was not without its tensions. But it survived intact until Amis's death.

The 1980s and 1990s were scarcely happy, age and Amis's anxious spirit did not allow for contentment, but they were far from miserable. Amis developed a routine: work, lunch at the Garrick, sleep, more work, television, supper, books, bed. His divorce from Hilly was always his deepest regret, but she was around and the three children not far away.

Eric Jacobs

Kingsley Amis, writer, born April 16, 1922; died October 22, 1995

Papers reveal Casement was smeared

Richard Norton-Taylor

NEW evidence of how the Home Office plotted a smear campaign to discredit Sir Roger Casement, the distinguished civil servant hanged for high treason in 1916 after trying to enlist German help for Irish freedom, was disclosed in documents released at the Public Record Office last week.

The government, concerned about demands for clemency from well-known Britons and Irish-Americans, was anxious to prevent Casement from becoming a martyr. Its weapon was his "black diaries" — seized by the security services — which revealed Casement's exotic and promiscuous homosexuality.

Sir Ernley Blackwell, assistant under-secretary at the Home Office, told the cabinet in a confidential document on July 15, 1916, that the diaries showed Casement had "for years been addicted to the grossest sodomitical practices". In a memo, Blackwell said there was no reason why the diaries should not be made known once the execution had taken place.

"I see not the slightest objection to hanging Casement and afterwards giving as much publicity to the contents of his diary as decency permits so that at any rate the public . . . may know what sort of man they are inclined to make a martyr of."

Transcripts of Casement's interrogation at Scotland Yard suggest that he was deeply pessimistic about the 1916 Easter Rising. He called it "a hopeless enterprise". This is supported in a letter in the files, seized by the US police, from John Devoy, the Republican leader in New York, to a colleague in San Francisco. Devoy said that when Casement landed in Ireland he sent a message to try to stop the rising. Devoy said Casement had no more to do with organising a ship carrying arms "than the man in the moon".

Blackwell noted in the margin that this was "probably true". The government, nevertheless, went ahead with a press campaign quashing suggestions that Casement had tried to stop the uprising.

Casement was arrested on a beach in Co Kerry in April 1916, three days before the Easter Rising.

Student growth 'at risk'

John Carvel

A UNIVERSITY vice-chancellor who has been a leading advocate of expanding higher education said this week that the sustained growth in student numbers must end to make resources available for schools and nurseries.

Brian Roper, vice-chancellor of the University of North London, told a Labour education conference at Skegness, that an incoming Blair government could not afford the programme of university expansion agreed with the Confederation of British Industry, trade unions, students and college authorities.

"Last year . . . I called for the target participation rate for 18-21-year-olds to increase from 32 per cent to over 40 per cent. I was wrong," said Mr Roper.

Not even a Labour government could pump in the funds needed to bring the university sector up to the standards the nation had a right to expect. What money was available should be injected into schools to combat continuing problems in literacy and numeracy.

If the right priority was to be given to education in schools, the number of students in higher education could only expand at the expense of unacceptable changes in policy, such as tuition fees for full-time degree students, Mr Roper concluded.

The Week in Britain James Lewis

Door to Irish peace opens a crack for Clinton's visit

THE PEACE process in Northern Ireland may still be deadlocked, but subtle changes of attitude were discernible when President Clinton's national security adviser, Tony Lake, started shuttling around London to pave the way for the president's visit to Ireland at the end of November.

The impasse has arisen as a result of Britain's insistence that the IRA must start decommissioning some of its arsenal before its political wing, Sinn Fein, can be admitted to all-party political talks. But Sir Patrick Mayhew, the Northern Ireland Secretary, varied his verbal formula somewhat after meeting the Irish foreign minister, Dick Spring. He ventured, cautiously, that a specially constituted international commission "might find some other means by which the necessary confidence can be generated" to allow all-party talks to proceed without any immediate IRA decommissioning of weapons.

Sir Patrick was at a loss to imagine what formula such a commission could possibly arrive at, but he seemed at least to be conceding the possibility of another way forward. Sinn Fein thought London might just be indicating a more flexible approach, but Ian Paisley, the leader of the hardline Democratic Unionist Party, clearly sensed that something had changed and predictably denounced a government "climbdown".

The new leader of the Ulster Unionist Party, David Trimble, who also wants to be seen as a hardliner, displayed his pragmatism by heading off to Washington for substantive talks with vice-president Al Gore, thereby at least acknowledging the existence of an American-Irish dimension to Ulster's political problems. "I'd rather not do it," he explained, "but I'd be a damn fool to ignore the realities."

It has long been evident that both the British government and Sinn Fein need to show a willingness to bend, if only to escape blame for an intransigence that could bring the peace process to an end. They, too, may finally be facing the realities.

TWO RULINGS by the European Court of Justice, both hingeing on the issue of discrimination, brought joy to men and anxiety to feminist campaigners.

The court decided that the British practice of granting free medical prescriptions to women at the age of 60, but making men pay until they are 65, breached European law on equal treatment in social security matters. The Government promptly conceded defeat and instructed chemists to exempt men over 60 from charges. The change will add another £40 million a year to National Health Service costs.

In the second case, brought by a German male worker, the court ruled that it was illegal to operate quota systems that give women priority for jobs and promotion. This caused consternation in the Labour party, which is committed to increasing the number of women MPs and has ordered constituencies not to select male parliamentary candidates in some winnable seats.

Labour is already being taken to an industrial tribunal by two men who were rejected as candidates, and the outcome will depend on the interpretation of Britain's Sex Discrimination Act. The case could, however, end up in the European Court where, on precedent, the men would win.

A parallel row is brewing over the demand that men should enjoy the same right as women to parental leave — three months off at some time during a child's first eight years. A deal of this kind is close to agreement between employers and trade unions in all states of the European Union except Britain, which opted out of the Social Chapter of the Maastricht treaty. When he was Employment Secretary last year, Michael Portillo said: "It is a matter of principle for the UK. We are against the principle."

But British fathers could, in spite of government objections, still enjoy EU-style parental leave if they work for firms with bases elsewhere in Europe. Unions expect such companies to make any European agreement cover staff in Britain too.

A NEW DEAL for the countryside was pledged by the Environment Secretary, John Gummer, in a White Paper on Rural England. His plans include cuts in business rates to save village shops and post offices, a relaxation of planning rules to encourage small businesses in disused farm buildings, and a "rural charter" to allow villagers to measure whether they have access to services such as health care, transport, housing and schools.

In the 10 years to 1991, Britain's rural population rose by nearly 7 per cent — the biggest increase in any European Union country. The countryside is also being used more than ever for relaxation from the pressures of urban life, which often conflicts with traditional activities such as farming and demands for conservation.

Many were disappointed that the White Paper did not offer a strategy for resolving these conflicts, but others welcomed it in the hope of arresting the decline in village services.

A PROPOSED biography of Frederick West, whose widow is presently on trial for the alleged murder of 10 young women and girls, was branded as "extremely distasteful" by the Prime Minister.

Mr West was found hanged in his cell in January while awaiting trial.

The biography is being commissioned by the Official Solicitor, Peter Harris, a statutory figure appointed by the Lord Chancellor who is answerable only to judges and not to the Government. His role is to represent the interests of children, the mentally ill, and anyone else deemed incapable of defending their legal rights.

Mr Harris said he was acting in the best financial interests of the five minor children of the West family, who would share the proceeds from the book. This is reported to be a six-figure sum.

Three adult West children have already struck their own financial deals with newspapers and there is expected to be a number of other books on what has been dubbed the "murder trial of the century".

Blood clot alert on brands of pill

Chris Mihill

ONE and a half million women were told last week that their brand of contraceptive pill could double the risk of a blood clot, provoking the biggest scare over the safety of oral contraceptives.

The alert involves seven of the most popular brands, which are taken by half of all women who use oral contraceptives in Britain. The suspect brands are: Femodene, Femodene ED, Minulet, Triadene, Tri-Minulet, Marvelon and Mercilon.

Research appears to indicate that the risk of deep vein thrombosis with the combined pill, which combines progestogen and oestrogen, is six times the average and double that faced by woman who use other types of pill.

Women using these brands — which were introduced because they were seen as safer than other types — are being advised to see their doctors but to finish their current packet, rather than stop taking them immediately, as the risk of thrombosis in an unplanned pregnancy outweighs the danger from the contraceptive.

The Committee on Safety of Medicines wrote to all GPs and pharmacists advising them of the latest findings. They were told that women should be switched to other brands unless they are intolerant to these.

The seven brands are not being banned by the committee, on the grounds that they are the only brands some women can take. If the extra risks are explained to women, they should have the right to continue to take the brands, the committee has concluded.

The three companies which produce the pills — Schering Health, Wyeth and Organon — said the studies were at variance with their use. Wyeth Laboratories, which manufactures two of the named pills, said: "These results are inconsistent with more than 10 years of substantial clinical trial data and spontaneous side-effect reports from around the world."

The action has been taken because of three new studies which indicated that the brands could double the risk of thrombosis compared with other types of pill. The brands contain either of two types of the hormone progestogen — gestodene and desogestrel — and oestrogen. Only these types of progestogen have been marked as risky — all other forms, including progestogen-only pills, have been found to be safe.

It is estimated that the risk of these causing a blood clot in the leg — which may move fatally to the lungs — is about 30 per 100,000 users, compared with 15 per 100,000 users of other types of pill. The risk of thrombosis during pregnancy is 60 per 100,000. The risk for a healthy woman not taking the pill is five per 100,000.

Angry GPs and alarmed women fuelled a growing dispute over the Government's decision to issue the health warning. It was also attacked for creating an "epidemic of anxiety" by Walter Spitzer, one of the researchers on whose work the warning was based.

Doctors criticised the manner of the warning, which left many unaware until they were contacted by patients or informed by the media.

Ian Bogle, chairman of the British Medical Association's GP's committee, said: "I can see no reason why the profession could not have been alerted to the potential risks of these drugs well before alarmist statements were issued to the press."

Peter Holden, a member of the BMA's GP's committee, said: "We are furious. We are fed up with professors lighting blue touch papers and then returning to ivory towers, leaving GPs to pick up the pieces."

Prof Spitzer, principal investigator in a European study, said that the warning ruined important research into the effects of third-generation contraceptive pills.

The studies do appear to indicate that the Government was correct on medical grounds, and Prof Spitzer's states that certain brands carry a higher risk of thrombosis. But Britain stands alone in issuing an alert.



Lottery refuses nine in 10 charities

David Brindle

ALMOST nine in 10 charities that have sought National Lottery funding will be refused, the lottery charities board said this week as it announced its first grants totalling £40 million.

The warning prompted calls for the board to be given a larger share of the lottery's proceeds by cutting the Treasury's take, squeezing the other "good cause" boards, or reducing the profits taken by Camelot, the game's operator.

Stuart Etherington, chief executive of the National Council for Voluntary Organisations, said: "The charities board has turned the tide and demonstrated that the lottery can help good charities very effectively. What the Government should do is look again at the proportion of money that goes to the board — and increase it."

David Sieff, the board's chairman, said it was up to ministers to decide if more cash should go to charities. But he added: "I certainly know how to spend it."

Controversy continued to dog the board as it announced that the £40 million would be split among 627 groups — fewer than 14 per cent of the 4,500 applications so far decided upon. The success rate is expected to be even lower among the 10,800 remaining bids for cash under the board's first programme, aimed at relieving poverty and disadvantage. After advance criticism of grants going to groups helping refugees and other "politically correct" causes, the board went out of its way to stress the breadth of its awards.

Timothy Hornsby, the board's chief executive, said: "Less than 1 per cent go to refugees — and they need it. Less than 3 per cent go to charities dealing with drug and alcohol addiction — and they need it. About 6 per cent go to ethnic minority groups — and they need it."

About a quarter of grants were going to groups working with children, and household names among recipients included citizen's advice bureaux (£1.9 million), the Royal National Institute for the Blind (£188,500), and Scope, formerly the Spastics Society (£315,000).

Some commentators had dwelled on a grant of £91,000 to the London-based Eritrean Advice and Information Centre, Mr Hornsby said. "So much play has been made about one refugee group, but it's a jolly good scheme."

About 44 per cent of the grants money is going to groups in Scotland. The board says that this is because its Scottish arm has made faster progress in assessing bids and that further awards over the next two months — the first programme is worth a total £162 million — will favour England.

The board has concentrated on helping smaller, community-based groups, with almost half of the grants going to organisations with annual income of less than £20,000.

Typical recipients include the 19th Swindon Scout group (£1,480 for a minibus and equipment); the Hull Council of Disabled People (£59,000 for a transport scheme); and the Dundee Cyrenians Night Shelter (£39,000 for a new hostel for homeless people).

Some charity experts are calling on the charities board to cut the average size of its grants and spread its limited funds further. There are concerns, too, about the impact on smaller groups of a large, one-off injection of cash — although the £64,000 mean average award disguises the fact half of all awards are less than £50,000.

The board receives 5.6 per cent of lottery proceeds — as do the heritage, millennium, sports and arts boards. The Treasury keeps 12 per cent, ticket agents receive 5 per cent, and Camelot takes 5 per cent in costs and profit. Lottery winnings account for 50 per cent.

BSE fears over farmer

Paul Brown

A FOURTH suspected case of a cattle farmer contracting the incurable human brain disorder linked to "mad cow disease" has led a government investigation committee to say it is "difficult to explain this as a chance phenomenon".

The fatal illness Creutzfeldt-Jakob Disease (CJD) is very rare but instances are increasing with 55 cases notified last year, compared with half that number a decade ago. However, even four cases among 115,000 British beef and dairy farmers is a statistical cluster. All four farmers had herds infected with the cattle disease Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy (BSE).

The Department of Health has always dismissed claims that BSE could be passed to humans. However, it sanctioned its advisory committee on BSE to investigate the link anew after the third case was confirmed on September 29. Creutzfeldt-Jakob Disease can only be confirmed by post-mortem, and the fourth farmer is still alive.

Richard Lacey, a microbiologist, has claimed there was a high chance of BSE being transferred to humans, and other scientists have expressed alarm at the increasing incidence of the disease. But there is still no evidence either way.

The committee and the department continue their advice that all meat is safe to eat.

£12bn elderly care bill to triple by 2031

David Brindle

TAXES would have to rise as much as 5p in the pound to fund an insurance scheme for the long-term care needs of elderly and disabled people, consultants warned last week.

Setting aside the contribution of unpaid carers, the costs of looking after dependent people will almost triple from £12 billion this year to £34.5 billion in 2031, according to forecasts by London Economics.

The figures, the most definitive to have emerged during the debate on paying for long-term care, were released as the Department of Health confirmed that ministers were considering setting up a scheme to cover the nursing expenses of people in care homes.

The scheme is one of several options being studied as a response to growing public disquiet over the costs of long-term care.

Most authorities believe that the problem of care costs will be solved only by some form of social insurance. Edward Richards, consultant with London Economics, said that a "pay-as-you-go" insurance scheme, by which today's workers would pay for today's dependents, would cost 1.8 per cent of gross earnings at present and as much as 5 per cent by 2031.

A fully funded scheme, by which workers would start to pay for their own future care, would alternatively need about 0.8 per cent of earnings, but would involve bridging costs of £6,000 a head for today's 60-year-olds, £5,700 for 50-year-olds and £3,500 for 40-year-olds.

London Economics calculates that informal care is worth £17.7 billion this year and bases its forecast of £34.5 billion formal costs in 2031 on a supplementary carers' contribution worth £20.3 billion.

● Campaigners for the elderly called on the Government to change the rules over calculating rent and council tax reductions after a survey revealed nearly a quarter of Britain's local authorities are reducing benefits to war pensioners.

Defence ministry writes off £111m

Anthony Bevins

THE Ministry of Defence has written off almost £111 million of taxpayers' money while refusing to say where it went. This follows a dispute about the costs of an overseas "military operation" — thought to have been the Gulf war.

A note buried in the Defence Appropriation Accounts for 1994-95 says: "Claims against a foreign government in respect of host nation support to a military operation were waived or abandoned." The loss is put at £110,906,000 but, despite the scale of the write-off, the "host nation" was not identified.

The latest published official information on the cost of the Gulf war was given to the Commons in a report by the National Audit Office in 1992, when Sir John Bourn, the Comptroller and Auditor General, disclosed that Britain was involved in a dispute with Saudi Arabia about payments, which were being kept confidential at the time.

His report suggested that, rather than making a loss on the war, the ministry was heading for a profit of more than £650m because contributions from foreign governments exceeded MoD costs. It was estimated the war against Saddam Hussein cost £1.5 billion, while contributions from foreign governments came to more than £2.15bn — including £582m in cash from Saudi Arabia. The Saudis also provided free supplies, such as petrol and water, at a cost of £108m.

Kuwait's contribution to the UK war effort was £660m, with the United Arab Emirates giving £278m; Germany, £274m; Japan, £192m; South Korea, £18m; Hong Kong, £16m and Belgium, £15m.

However, despite a positive balance of payments on the war, Whitehall calculated a loss by charging £336m for postponing spending cuts, and a full replenishment of military stores. — *The Observer*

Gay rights priests win victory in synod

Madeleine Bunting

PRIESTS who are prominent advocates of homosexual rights have topped the polls in the Southwark and London dioceses in elections for the Church of England's General Synod, as the first election results indicate a strong showing for the gay lobby.

The Rev Malcolm Johnson, the first member of the clergy to be elected to the House of Clergy on an openly gay ticket, urged action to eradicate the Church's "cruel homophobia" in a statement following his election on Monday.

Mr Johnson is joined in the synod by the Rev Jeffrey John, who stood for the first time in the neighbouring diocese of Southwark, and who endorsed same sex marriages in his election address. He is the author of a radical pamphlet calling for reforms on homosexuality.

Richard Kirker, of the Lesbian and Gay Christian Movement (LGCM), said: "Mr Johnson is by no means the first gay in synod, but he has the unique distinction of being the most honest and has made no secret of his homosexuality. It will be embarrassing to the Church that he has won more votes than anyone else in London."

The LGCM claims that nearly half of the clergy synod members elected in London and Southwark now actively support homosexual rights on issues such as the ordination of practising gays and gay marriage.

Other gains for the gay lobby include supporters such as Brian McHenry, who came top of the lay poll in Southwark and is tipped for the chair of the House of Laity, and the Archdeacon of Wandsworth, David Gerrard.

The gains for the gay lobby will increase tension within the Church over this issue, which many see as potentially more divisive than the ordination of women.

Philip Hacking, the chairman of Reform, the evangelical grouping in the synod which is opposed to homosexuality, urged the Church to sack priests who are practising homosexuals. "The bishops can't duck this," he said.

In Brief

MORE THAN 50 women, some in chains, gathered outside the office of the Chief Rabbi, Jonathan Sacks, in central London to protest about Jewish law which gives a husband the right to withhold a *Get*, or religious divorce, even if the wife has been awarded a divorce in a civil court.

SPENDING at British tourist attractions hit a record £1 billion last year, up 5 per cent on 1993.

GROWING numbers of fraudulent claims for student grants costing millions of pounds have prompted local authorities to call for more rigorous checks by universities.

ERIC LOMAX, a 76-year-old former prisoner of war, has won the £10,000 Esquire/Waterstone's non-fiction award with his first novel.

CHLOE and Nicole Astbury, the 35-day-old conjoined twins, died after contracting a rare bowel condition.

SHELL has acknowledged that political pressures ruled out dumping the disused Brent Spar oil storage rig at sea.

MEN involved in paternity disputes will be offered free DNA tests by the Child Support Agency. But they will have to pay back the cost — about £400 — if a court finds that they did father the child. In 94 per cent of paternity cases this year, the men were judged to have fathered the child.

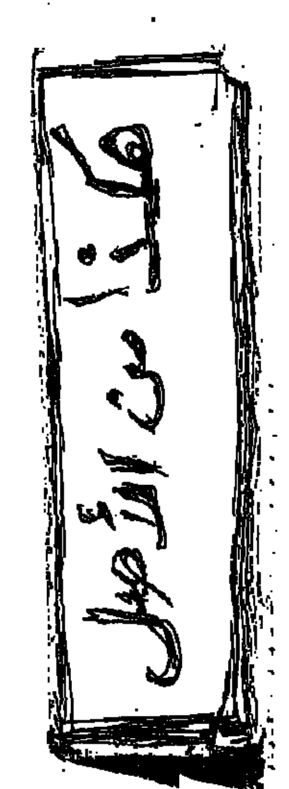
CHARLES MOORE, a Thatcherite Tory, has been appointed editor of the Daily Telegraph after the departure of Max Hastings. The former editor of the Sunday Telegraph will be replaced by Dominic Lawson, editor of the Spectator magazine since 1990.

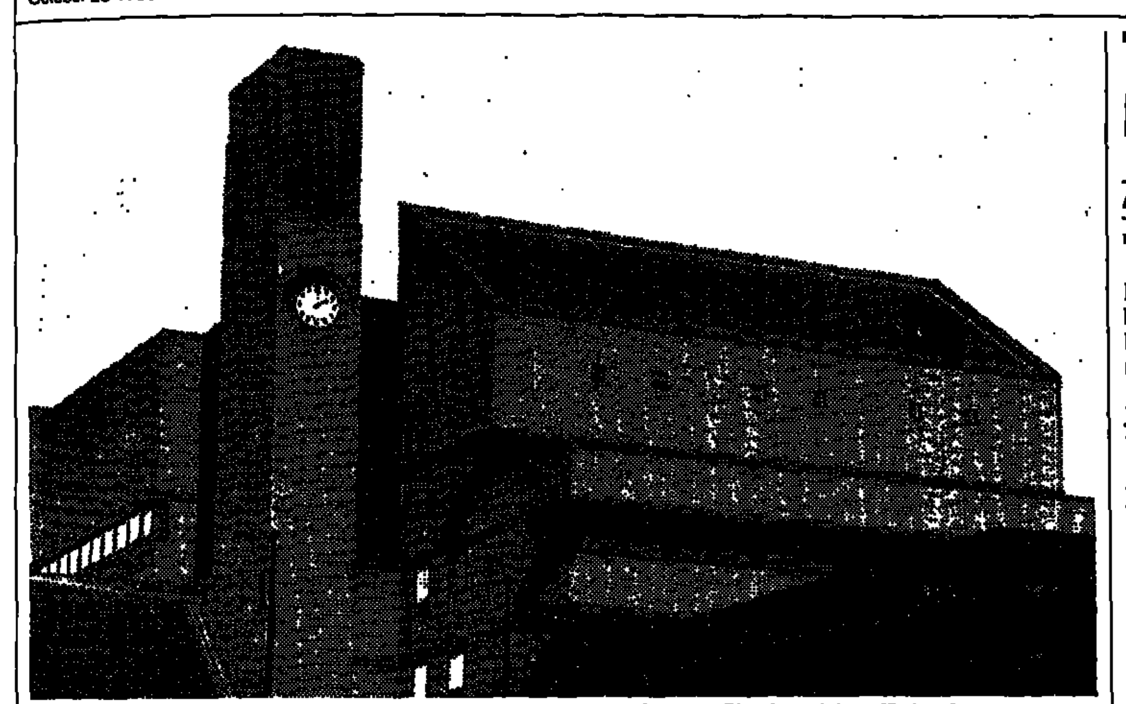
GAVIN EWART, one of the country's most prolific poets and a former chairman of the Poetry Society, has died aged 79. His work covered a huge range of themes from war to cricket. Obituary next week

KEITH MOORE, accountant to the rock star Sting, has been jailed for six years for stealing £6 million from his client.

PATRICK HODGSON, who worked for the Metropolitan Police, was charged with the murder of an unarmed man earlier this year. He is the first policeman to be charged with murder while on duty.

RALPH WHITLOCK, countryman, journalist and contributor to the Guardian Weekly for 14 years, has died at the age of 81. Obituary next week





Public convenience . . . An academy for secret police, as Prince Charles claimed? As glamorous as a public lavatory, as Labour's Gerald Kaufman insisted? The hoardings came down last week, and the public can now get their first view of the £500 million investment in the future British Library. The fence which shielded 'a dim collection of sheds groping for some symbolic significance' (Prince Charles again) has been removed to lay the pavement fronting on to the Euston Road in London. The building is to be handed to the Library late next year, a mere 10 years behind schedule PHOTOGRAPH: GRAHAM TURNER

Blair completes shadow reshuffle

Patrick Wintour

TONY BLAIR, the Labour leader, last week completed a wide-ranging shadow cabinet reshuffle by promoting new entrant Clare Short to shadow transport secretary and demoting her predecessor, Michael Meacher, to the role of deputy to David Blunkett in the new combined education and employment brief.

Mr Meacher had held the transport portfolio for only a year and will be bitterly disappointed at what is bound to be seen as a negative verdict on his campaign against railway privatisation. Mr Blair's aides, however, insisted Mr Meacher's new role as chief spokesman on employment, including training, was "absolutely vital".

Jack Cunningham is to have shadow cabinet status by taking the job of national heritage spokesman, even though he lost his seat in the elections.

In possibly the key political move of the reshuffle, Donald Dewar goes to chief whip. One Labour backbencher, Austin Mitchell, criticised Mr Dewar's shift as equivalent to putting Albert Einstein in charge of a playgroup.

Margaret Beckett, formerly shadow health secretary, fills the vacancy created by Dr Cunningham's exit, and will now work closely with Gordon Brown. Harriet Harman moves to health, and Chris Smith, formerly heritage, takes on the welfare brief at social security.

Overall, the elections saw a triumph for Old Labour against the party modernisers, with MPs rallying round any shadow cabinet member perceived to be under threat, either due to media sniping or supposed negative briefings from Blairite aides.

Ron Davies, the shadow Welsh secretary and a more progressive figure than some credit, was a beneficiary of this backlash after the Welsh media bayed for Mr Davies to be replaced by Kim Howells.

In other important middle-ranking appointments, Ian McCartney, the fast-rising frontbencher, was given a key role of shadow minister within the Department of Trade and Industry team responsible for preparing the party's policy on the Maastricht treaty's Social Chapter and the minimum wage. His appointment will reassure the unions nervous that the minimum wage policy is being ditched.

The effective Tessa Jowell has been appointed shadow spokeswoman for women.

In a secret day of the long knives, Mr Blair saw eight middle-ranking shadow ministers, including Joan Walley, Robin Corbett, Eric Martlew and Martin O'Neill, asking them to relinquish their jobs to open the way to promote the cream of the 1992 intake.

● Cherie Booth, wife of the Labour leader, last week called for the retraining of some judges to make them more sensitive to the problems facing domestic violence victims.

Ms Booth was speaking at the launch of a Labour consultation document on the elimination of sexual and domestic violence against women. It was the first time she has spoken on a Labour party platform since her husband became leader.

The Labour document, Peace At Home, says one in four crimes of violence reported to the police are the result of a woman being assaulted by the man with whom she lives, and calls for a strengthening of the law on rape. Claiming the issue was one "our society prefers to forget", Ms Booth said: "If you are a battered woman, you have lost all confidence in yourself — some of these women come to believe they deserve it. They do not. That sort of awareness training some judges do need.

"At first, I could not understand why my clients put up with the abuse. But I soon realised it is one thing to advise them to walk away, and quite another for them to have the courage and means to act. For many women with children and no money — what alternative do they have?"

Treasury tied Howard's hands in prison row

Alan Travis

THE Home Secretary had only Derek Lewis's head to offer MPs last week for the Parkhurst break-out because the Treasury had blocked any announcement of new money for extra prison security.

The shadow home secretary, Jack Straw, said the Home Secretary's inability to deliver the funds to implement the Learmont recommendations forced him "to offer MPs Mr Lewis's head instead".

Mr Howard's room for manoeuvre was limited by a letter from the Treasury a fortnight ago which bluntly told him he could not promise new money for prison security.

The revelation may help to explain why Mr Howard decided to make an example of Mr Lewis, the director-general of prisons, whose dismissal prompted the most vicious debate for many months in the Commons.

During the debate, Mr Howard eluded Labour's charges of improper interference in the running of the Prison Service — though not without damaging revelations about the pressure placed on Mr Lewis to remove John Marriott from the governorship of Parkhurst. Voting was 280 to 231, a government majority of 49.

During bitter exchanges with Mr Straw, and with Tony Blair, Mr Howard insisted he had not acted improperly. He said the Opposition leader had "demeaned his office by allowing it to be used as a vehicle for the spleen of a bitter man".

Tory MPs claimed a resounding victory over Mr Straw, who failed to punch his weight during the debate.

Mr Lewis, who is suing the Home Secretary for wrongful dismissal, meanwhile widened his attack on the Home Secretary by warning that his latest tougher sentencing package will double the prison population to 100,000 at a cost of £1.5 billion a year.

"I would be very worried if we were starting to go down the slippery slope of the American experience, which has resulted in 1.5 million in prison — that is five times as many as we have in this country per head of population."



The storm over the sacking of Mr Lewis has persuaded the Government to bring forward publication of a new code laying down the duties and responsibilities of civil servants, *Richard Norton-Taylor adds*.

Individuals faced with crises of conscience or unacceptable demands from ministers will be able to appeal to the Civil Service Commissioners, a body independent of the Whitehall management chain. In a further concession to the First Division Association, which represents 11,000 top officials the code will also give the commissioners the task of ensuring that senior Whitehall appointments are made on merit.

But the FDA said that the code would not address two key issues: the rules covering evidence by officials to Commons select committees, and the prerogative powers which allow ministers to play around with the Civil Service without any reference to Parliament.

The code will reaffirm the convention that civil servants and agency chief executives give evidence to Commons committees "on behalf of" ministers and subject to ministerial instructions. Ministers, and ministers alone, decide what information should be given to MPs. Officials say that puts them in the position of having to mislead Parliament on their ministers' behalf, or go beyond the constraints imposed by civil servants' political neutrality.

The Government argues that the rules are designed "to strengthen the accountability of ministers to the House". That has a hollow ring in the wake of the Lewis affair, which showed that while the Home Secretary had power, he could avoid responsibility.

Mr Howard told the Commons last week: "My position is perfectly clear. I am personally accountable to this House for all matters concerning the Prison Service . . . The director-general is responsible for day-to-day operations."

Yet it was widely acknowledged in Whitehall and Westminster — even before the row over the Prison Service — that the lines between operations and policy were blurred.

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Mark Thatcher quits Texas for Cape Town

FOURTEEN years after getting famously lost in the Dark Continent, Mark Thatcher is returning to Africa to live. But this time he has chosen the gentle vineyards of the south western Cape rather than the harsh wastelands of the Sahara, *writes David Pallister*.

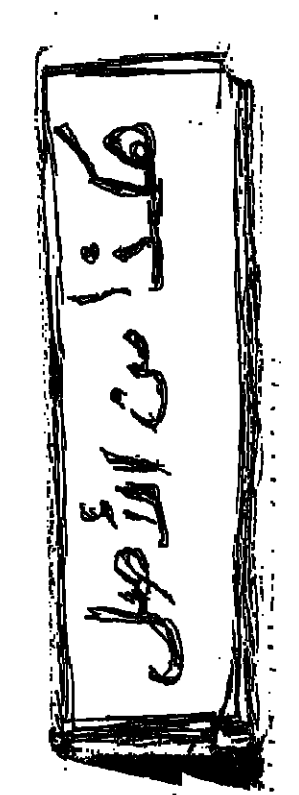
After a rocky patch in their marriage, he and his Texan wife, Diane, are moving with their two children from an exclusive suburb of Dallas to Constantia, an exclusive suburb of Cape Town. It is a switch from mock Georgian to supermarket Cape Dutch.

In the words of the estate agent who is selling the £570,000 thatched house, Brenda Preston, the area "is very quiet and rural, a cross between Wimbledon and Somerset. Many of the residents are old Cape money."

Mr Thatcher's flight from Texas follows a series of failed business ventures and damaging law suits which have so far cost him up to £1 million. He still faces a trial next year for tax evasion — a charge which he has denied. As one friend is quoted as saying, he wants to put all that "Texas crap" behind him.

With a view of Table Mountain and the ocean, the Thatchers' new home stands in two acres, and has six bedrooms, four garages, and a kidney-shaped swimming pool. When the family move in, like most wealthy white residents, they will be protected by armed guards and a high security wall.

In the past few years he has been a regular visitor to South Africa, seeking to invest the money he was making in America. One aspect of the new regime will please him: the abolition of rand restrictions means that he can easily repatriate his money to his tax shelter in Jersey.



The UN's rocky 50th birthday

THE DEPARTURE of Willy Claes from Nato is more than an unfortunate accident at an inconvenient time. It is a necessary reminder that this organisation, though currently regarded as a more effective substitute in Europe for the United Nations, has its own deep problems of identity. Its role and future are controversial even though it has, for the time being, bailed out the international community in Bosnia. It is by no means certain that Nato will successfully square the circle by extending its scope into the former Soviet Union without antagonising the current occupants of the Kremlin.

Meanwhile the presidents and premiers gathered in New York last weekend for a final celebration of the UN's 50th anniversary in an atmosphere of even greater uncertainty than when the birthday party began in June. Now the talk is all of downsizing and the selection of realistic tasks. The UN's "failure" in Bosnia looms large; so does the clumsy pressure of the US Congress. Who would have imagined, in the false dawn of hope as the Wall collapsed that five years on the UN ideal would be so widely regarded as an illusion? Nation states rule — and not just the small ones that have sprung up in the interstices of the old world order. The lesson of Bosnia is not that the US and Nato stepped in because the international body could not live up to expectations. It is that the controlling powers never allowed the UN sufficient soldiers, materials, funds or authority to try.

This lament is by now so obvious that many UN officials no longer bother to make it. The Secretary-General himself seems to have given up trying. Last month he advocated replacing the UN peacekeepers with a multinational force whether or not a peace agreement was achieved. Mr Boutros-Ghali now prefers to talk of new tasks for the UN such as drugs, crime, the environment and migration. It is less than four years since the Secretary-General tabled his "Agenda for Peace" with its vigorous proposals "to strengthen the UN's capacity for preventive diplomacy, for peacemaking and for peacekeeping". His proposals for armed forces to be assigned to the UN on a "permanent basis" and for greatly improved funding arrangements have never been properly debated, let alone put into practice.

There is nothing wrong with a system of international authority which licenses regional bodies to handle regional disputes. The problem is that the regional bodies in place are neither made for the job nor owe primary allegiance to the UN. Nato's intervention in Bosnia is an *ad hoc* arrangement that may or may not succeed: we still have to work out what is the right sort of security organisation for a Europe extending to the Urals.

Beyond these organisational questions lies a more fundamental problem to be tackled in New York. In the struggle for international peace, prevention is better than cure. Ambassador Mohamed Sahnoun — the former UN special representative in Somalia — has argued that such disasters will only be avoided if the UN can tackle more effectively the underlying causes of insecurity. The next 50 years will surely see a rapid growth in environmental and population pressures which will form an even more explosive mix with resurgent nationalism. The world community will need much stronger institutions to anticipate and deal with a widening range of crises. This is the real future to be faced.

Torn in the USA

SINO-US RELATIONS will seek to pick up a faltering rhythm this week when President Clinton meets President Jiang Zemin in New York. But the location tells the story. By American choice Mr Jiang is being kept at arm's length from the White House. This is more than the result of recurring disagreement over Taiwan, trade and human rights. The dialogue has lost sight of the strategic dimension which characterised the early years of their rapprochement.

The Tiananmen Square massacre is still deeply etched into US memories. Many Chinese — including those who were horrified by those events — still resent being lectured by the US on human rights. But the real problem is that neither side can figure out what the other wants. The thaw of the 1970s may not have been based solely on a common anti-Soviet interest, but this did provide the clinching argument. The world is more complicated, and Asia particularly. US strategists are impressed by China's growing economy. They are wary of an assertive nationalism that now substitutes for socialism. They observe the symbolism of Mr Jiang's inspection last week of a Chinese navy with ocean-going ambitions. They wonder if the old myth of "containing China" might become anachronistic reality.

The Chinese have their own complaints. Little credit is given to them for having played a responsible role in the UN and improving relations with all their neighbours. They suspect the US may have decided to discourage a strong China. Some fear a break-up operation of the type which succeeded against the Soviet Union and that the US is tampering at the edges of its understanding with China over Taiwan.

Many observers in both countries still believe that in the end neither can afford to be adversaries. But though the chance of irretrievable breakdown may be slim, it still exists. China could become a disturbing factor in the next US presidential elections: Taiwan might push its natural drift towards independence too far. There is also a worrying lack of expertise in Washington. The core of professionals who ate, drank and slept China after the Nixon visit has been scattered.

Both Washington and Beijing need to take action. US disquiet at Chinese human rights practice does not entitle Washington to move the goalposts over Taiwan. China should show greater transparency on military matters and take overdue steps to promote political as well as economic reform. Above all, both sides should recognise the need for a stable relationship that cannot continue to veer between love and hate.

Battling right up to the bell

IMAGINE you were Michael Howard last week. You have been accused of lying to Parliament. Your normal friends have abandoned you. The Daily Telegraph, in an editorial, has condemned you for a failure of leadership, concluding: "He cannot claim credit for being tough unless he also accepts that the buck stops not with the director general [of prisons] but with him." The Times's columnists, Simon Jenkins and William Rees-Mogg, have been even crueller. In the words of Rees-Mogg: "A very political home secretary who is rather bad at politics." The people closest to your office are openly criticising you: the prison director you sacked, the acting prison director, the chief inspector of prisons, the prison governors, and even anonymous civil servants. The other parts of the criminal justice system — the judiciary and probation service — are equally contemptuous. The official inquiry into the prison security, which you set up, has exposed the offence which you have always denied: your day-to-day interference in prison management.

So how do you perform? The Opposition, which kicks off, claims to have a "smoking fax" and indeed produces one: the confidential minutes of the meeting you had with the director general over the sacking of the Parkhurst prison governor. They show beyond doubt the denials you have made about your interference in the sacking are false.

So how do you perform? With trepidation, hesitation, and a glimpse of guilt? Not a bit of it, if you are Michael Howard. There was not a single moment of hesitation, shame or guilt. Not a moment of self-doubt or uncertainty. The Home Secretary remained supremely self-confident and self-satisfied. He said he was going to enjoy the occasion, and enjoy the occasion he did. Self-evidently so. He smirked and smiled through the whole debate.

Like many ideologues, Michael Howard has created his own reality. He has substituted his own definition of reality for truth. It makes him psychologically impregnable. Even the most damning questions — and he dodged one awkward one seven times last week — leave him undaunted. By defining reality to fit his own view of events, he is indestructible: never needing to admit error or even apologise for failure.

The row is not over yet. There is still the law suit initiated by Derek Lewis, the sacked director general. The courts will not be as supine as the backbench Tories whose votes saved Mr Howard last week. The prison service and Mr Howard will remain locked in conflict. Meanwhile, a prisoner commits suicide every six days. But the political distractions roll on with the prisoners forgotten.

Why Europe had to give up its bad habits

John Carvel reports on how the Guardian won a famous victory over the EU's secretive legislators

THE Guardian's knockout victory at the European Court in Luxembourg last week will, we hope, have some salutary effect on our opponents, the Council of Ministers of the European Union. The Council is certainly the most powerful of the EU institutions, but there is no reason why it should continue to be the most secretive and arrogant.

I brought the case as a private citizen and was supported by the paper as an interested party. We acted because we thought the Council behaved hypocritically and unlawfully when it denied us access to documents that should have been available under its freedom of information code.

When I was posted to Brussels three years ago, I soon came to the conclusion that the Council operated under rules that were alien to the European democratic tradition. While preaching the virtues of transparency, it legislated behind closed doors. On most working days ministers would fly in from their national capitals to consider laws which, when passed, would be binding on the EU's 350 million citizens. But the citizens were not allowed to know what was being done in their name.

In London the Eurosceptics tended to rant against the European Commission as if it were to blame for everything that diminished national sovereignty. They got it wrong. The Commission's job has always been to propose new laws and administer existing ones. The real power to decide whether legislation passes — and in what form — lay with the ministers of member states, subject to a little tinkering at the margin by the MEPs. To that extent the Council has operated like a parliament, but — unlike all the parliaments of Europe — the legislative stages of its deliberations were confidential and without a verbatim transcript. Even the highly condensed minutes of decisions were classified.

Of course, plenty of information was given out on what went on in the secret legislative sessions. The latest drafts of directives were leaked systematically and national spokesmen descended periodically to spin their rival lines about how their ministers were having an excellent influence. The journalists usually made a reasonable attempt at piecing together several sets of half-truths into more or less accurate reports.

But the system ensured that a bedrock of unassailable fact was never available as of right to the citizens. It was never possible to state with absolute certainty that a particular minister behaved in a particular way. The people could never hold their representatives accountable.

At the outset, this undemocratic system may have been unavoidable. The Treaty of Rome was the result of a benevolent conspiracy by the élites of Europe to integrate their peoples to prevent them fighting another war. Treating legislation as if it was a form of secret diplomacy was a part of this paternalist approach.

Yet by the autumn of 1992 — after the Danes voted against the Maastricht treaty, and the French nearly followed — it became obvious to most of the players in the Brussels game that action had to be taken to make the decision-making process less remote. After more than a year of debate, the Council agreed a code of conduct promising "the widest possible access to documents". It came into force early last year. I put in an application under the code asking for three sets of Council minutes and supporting papers from Coreper, the committee of EU ambassadors that pre-cooks the ministerial agenda.

At the end of the month allowed under the code for reply, I received a letter from the Council librarian responsible for the freedom of information policy. Some documents from the Justice and Agriculture Councils were withheld "to protect the institution's interests in the confidentiality of its proceedings".

I used an appeal procedure to challenge this ruling. In May 1994, a month after the deadline for reply, the EU foreign ministers rejected the appeal. This was the decision that landed the Council in court. Its justification for refusing to release the documents was a catch-all clause in the code of conduct that allowed it to withhold anything in the interests of maintaining confidentiality.

But the Council gave no reason for withholding these particular documents. In fact, we later discovered that there was a reason. In a panicky response to my demands, the Council laid down a blanket ban on the disclosure of any minutes that might reveal national points of view. We knew this from a leaked memo by the Council's own legal service, which admitted that officials were systematically refusing access.

PROPOSALS were tabled to give middle-ranking officials the power to decide which ministerial statements could safely be released. Since the committee dealing with this matter was known in Brussels as the GAG — the Groupe Affaires Générales — the prospects for greater openness were sounding bad.

But help was at hand. The Guardian asked the European Parliament and the governments of Denmark and the Netherlands — all strong supporters of openness — to intervene formally. We knew that such interventions at the European Court were normally limited to support for other member states or EU institutions, but by lobbying we secured the help we wanted.

The court found that the illegality of the ban on disclosing minutes was so clear-cut that it did not have to examine the Guardian's more far-reaching arguments that EU citizens have a fundamental right to know what happens when EU laws are made. This was a pity. Our case, based on the EU treaties, the European Convention of Human Rights and practice in member states, seemed compelling. These arguments will now inevitably be put at the 1996 inter-governmental conference to review the Maastricht treaty.

For our part, we are content that we have nudged the debate in the right direction and have established the first chapter of EU law on freedom of information.

Bosnia Policy Needs Bigger Goal

COMMENT
Stephen S. Rosenfeld

THE UNITED STATES has its sights set too low in Bosnia. It is riveted on the prospect of launching a process of local accommodation and reconstruction. It should be zeroing in on the companion requirement to use the Bosnia opening to relieve the gathering strains in overall relations with Russia and to create a new basis for European security and stability. This is the true prize.

It takes a leap to realize that what is being addressed is not just the peace of Bosnia but the shape and the "security architecture" of the new post-Cold War Europe. But those are the ultimate stakes of the immediate project of arranging the proposed international peacekeeping mission.

Full NATO participation is, of course, the core of this mission. The alliance, seeing an opportunity to partially redeem itself for its earlier evasions, is now pursuing the project with vigor. NATO is also pleased to be receiving offers of volunteers from, among others, its new "partners for peace" in central Europe.

But the real catch would be Russia. To enlist its substantial weight in putting Bosnia back together again would mark a first, huge and opportune success for Russia, Europe and the United States in collaborating on a demanding security mission in the heart of Europe. A Russian role would point the way to solving or at least easing the major dispute going on over the expansion of NATO. It would open up new modes of cooperation in Europe as a whole.

The United States, though committed to supply leadership, is lagging. It formally invites Russian participation in Bosnia but leaves the impression that the obstacles are insuperable and that NATO would just as soon do the job on its own. The Pentagon's responsibility for setting the terms of an American military operation appears to be crowding out the State Department's responsibility to see the larger political picture, the one with Russia in it. The White House has a NATO focus that does not seem to extend to Moscow.

Granted, the problem of fitting a square Russia into a round NATO peacekeeping hole isn't easy.



At ease . . . A Bosnian soldier rests in Sanski Most, recaptured from the Serbs by the Fifth Corps PHOTOGRAPH: CHRIS HELGREN

Moscow doesn't want any of its men to serve under NATO command. NATO, only now escaping its old "dual key" tie to the United Nations, is leery of a new dual-key arrangement that would give a full political voice and veto to the Kremlin. A geographic split that left NATO and Russia policing separate sectors begins to look like divided Berlin. A functional split that assigns peacekeeping to NATO and reconstruction to Moscow seems a cop-out. Russia's lack of cash to pay its way complicates things.

But this is the beginning of the discussion, not the end. Bosnia is in Russia's back yard, and an area of traditional Russian strategic and sentimental preoccupation. Forget the ultranationalists: Bosnia matters to mainstream Russians. Boris Yeltsin, approaching parliamentary and presidential elections, cannot possibly wish to be accused of "losing Serbia" to an alliance moving ever more assertively into Russia's buffer zone — an alliance Russia cannot reasonably figure either to match or to join.

The Russians can perhaps handle having to bargain for a role in Bosnia, as NATO's ascendancy is forcing them to do. But the role they are so far being offered is distinctly subsidiary: not as a partner on the main questions but merely as a discussant and as a provider of certain limited nonpolitical services.

The alliance can do better. It can, for instance, press harder for Russia's own policy suggestions and drench the Russians in policy consultations. The peace plan that American diplomacy is now trying to settle upon Bosnia, after all, was written by a committee including Russia. It is not only useful but fair to expect Moscow to cooperate in putting it into effect.

Then, the alliance and especially the United States have got to start thinking bigger — in terms of building Europe, not just of rescuing Bosnia. All through the NATO expansion debate, Washington has spoken of taking Russia's special dimensions and traditions into account and of finding an alternative to bringing Moscow into NATO. To these ends NATO has offered Russia a "special relationship." Suddenly, without notice and without much acknowledgment, the moment arrives to make such a special relationship real. Bosnia represents a timely and perhaps one-time opportunity for a political and strategic breakthrough. Here is the right lead item for the Yeltsin-Clinton summit.

Whites Need to Change Their Message to Blacks

OPINION
Robert Kuttner

I CAN'T HELP thinking that white America gets the black leaders it deserves.

Louis Farrakhan is hardly the first leader to ask the black community to heal itself. He is, rather, the first in recent memory to gain prominence by combining a message of self-help with bigotry rather than tolerance.

But look back at the roster of black leaders bearing similar messages, minus the hate. Jesse Jackson, for one, has spent thousands of hours imploring black youngsters to stay off drugs, stay in school, pursue a career, remember that you're a man when you raise a child, not when you father one. Of course, Jesse Jackson also had some strong words about military spending, full employment, corporate irresponsibility, and the U.S. role in the Third World. For that, white America dismissed him as unacceptably radical.

Remember how the Democrats could hardly bear having Jesse at their gatherings? How the Democratic Leadership Council and its head, Bill Clinton, went out of their way to dis Jackson? How the trashing of Jackson became a litmus test of political respectability?

Marian Wright Edelman, to name another, as a champion of civil rights became an advocate of saving the children. But white political America has turned its back on Edelman's humane agenda of family, community and self-help.

Or take Martin Luther King. When King was assassinated, he was marching with sanitation workers in Memphis, shifting his focus from civil rights to economic justice, warning about the divisive effects of the Vietnam War. All this was considered dangerously radical by the white elite. We should be so lucky today to have Martin Luther King making us itchy, rather than Minister Farrakhan.

On the network coverage of the Million Man March, two of black America's most eloquent spokesmen, Julian Bond and Roger Wilkins, explained why they were not marching. They found the gathering inspirational, but its fuhrer appalling. And they were treated by their white interviewers with great deference. But when Bond and Wilkins talk of remedy — decent jobs, decent housing, changed national priorities — they are dismissed as the same dangerous radicals.

Let's recall just what message white America has been giving black America lately. Jesse Jackson's hard-working brethren who "take the early bus" and do honest work for wretched wages — what do they get? A minimum wage whose real purchasing power is at historic lows; a cut in the Earned Income Tax Credit; a longer wait between buses.

Unemployed blacks without skills for today's job markets get more money for prisons, less for schools; welfare cutoffs without jobs; reduced day-care allotments; no health insurance. White drug kingpins get plea-bargain deals, while black street-dealers draw long prison terms.

How about black leaders who preach tolerance, responsibility and coalition rather than hate? Remember what the Republican Senate did to Dr. Henry Foster, whose entire career was devoted to encouraging responsible behavior on the part of teenagers.

And recall how Bill Clinton treated the scholarly Lani Guinier. Professor Guinier, ironically, was pilloried for seeking alternatives to racially gerrymandered voting districts, to reconcile black political participation with integration rather than separatism.

No wonder ordinary blacks give Louis Farrakhan a hearing.

White liberals sympathetic to blacks did make one mistake when they abandoned full employment in favor of compensatory social programs. If whites of goodwill want to encourage black self-help, let's start with jobs that pay a living wage. But self-help hardly means we should gut spending on day care, education and training, public investment, health, housing, let alone civil rights.

Minister Farrakhan is not just the mirror image of Mark Fuhrman; he's also the reciprocal of Jesse Helms and Newt Gingrich.

Israeli Minister Breaks Taboo on Torture

Barton Gellman in Jerusalem

ONE WEDNESDAY afternoon in August, the chief of Israel's Shin Bet security service held a rare news conference and made a still rarer confession of failure.

Four days earlier, he said, his agents had arrested a suspected terrorist. The man, it turned out, had built a bomb and planned an attack by a confederate on a Jerusalem bus. But interrogators did not discover the plot in time, and five passengers died in the August 21 explosion.

The Shin Bet, its chief told a group of Israeli reporters, missed the chance to save lives because it had been prevented from using suitably "extreme forms of interrogation." He blamed Attorney General Michael Ben Yair for tying his hands.

Ben Yair, whose reply was made public last week, was so angry that he broke a longstanding taboo. He became the first senior government official in memory to use the word "torture" in the context of Israel's treatment of Arab security prisoners, and he spoke graphically about a method known as "whiplashing" or "shaking."

The attorney general's language departed sharply from the official euphemisms of the recurring public debate. He spoke of violence in the interrogation cells, and brain damage, and even death. He disclosed nothing not well documented by the world's leading human rights organizations, several of which have long accused Israel of torture, but the words were revolutionary for a man in his position.

His conclusion was far less so, though equally revealing of the broad Israeli consensus that the war on terror cannot be pretty. The shaking method should be permitted, Ben Yair said, but not routinely. Interrogators should first need to show convincing proof that the information they might extract could prevent "a large and very grave calamity" — a test the Shin Bet had not met in August.

"We will not open torture chambers to replace intelligence," the attorney general told the legal journal Ha Lishka, in an interview given on September 13.

The attorney general and the Shin Bet chief were both speaking of a technique known in Hebrew as *tiltulim*. Scottish pathologist Derrick Pounder, who proved that the technique killed a detainee last spring, described it thus: The prisoner is bound and then "gripped either by the clothing or around the shoulders and shaken with extreme violence." It results in great spinal pain, unconsciousness and, in some cases, brain injuries."

The interrogation death of detainee Abdel Zamed Harizat in April, Ben Yair told the law journal, "shook all of us in the Justice Ministry and me personally. We saw a demonstration on videotape of the shaking, and it was completely different than what is written in the regulations. I discovered that this is emphatically a physical method, and the fact is that it caused a man's death."

"We didn't know what shaking was," Ben Yair said, referring to the ministerial committee that is supposed to supervise the Shin Bet. "We thought it was a slight rocking. The damage that could be caused by shaking is not only death. [The subject] can also suffer brain damage. I am not ready to see every black-bearded Palestinian youngster who is detained for interrogation end up with brain damage."

Shin Bet officials, who seldom speak to foreign reporters, reacted with outrage in comments published last week in the newspaper Yedioth Aharonoth. None, including the service chief, can be named under Israeli censorship rules. "It is impossible to descend to the level of speech of those who can call Shin Bet interrogators inquisition goons," said one senior official. "All the accusations in the article against the Shin Bet are vanity and vain aspiration."

A second official said Ben Yair had shot his own legal client in the foot, because he plainly implied that the Shin Bet engages in torture at a time when a pending lawsuit before the Supreme Court alleges just that.

Honduran Army Finds Itself in the Dock

Douglas Farah in Tegucigalpa

MILTON JIMÉNEZ remembers the day in 1982 when he and five other students were arrested, taken to a clandestine prison outside the capital, threatened with death, submerged in water and kept from breathing beneath a rubber hood. But he never thought there would be a day of reckoning for his captors.

Last July, however, a civilian prosecutor took the unprecedented step of indicting eight Honduran army officers and two enlisted men in connection with Jiménez's ordeal. All 10 either belonged to or provided intelligence to Battalion 316, a CIA-trained intelligence unit accused of scores of murders and kidnappings. The prosecutor formally charged them with kidnapping and called on Jiménez and other survivors to testify.

The prosecutor's move marked an extraordinary departure from the general Latin American rule of military impunity. As a result, it set off a political earthquake here, where the military traditionally has regarded itself — and frequently has been regarded by Hondurans — as the ultimate font of power.

At the same time, the case has sparked a reexamination of the role that the United States and its Central Intelligence Agency played during a time of human rights abuses by some in the Honduran military — which was a key US ally in making Honduras a springboard for the US-sponsored "contra" war against the Marxist Sandinista government in neighboring Nicaragua. But the question now is whether the indictment will ever be anything more than a a subject of debate.

In a rare display of defiance, judicial authorities vow that the process will go forward in the courts. But the Honduran military, whose power has long outstripped that of the civilian government, has balked at even having its men testify. It has made threatening gestures — including a drive-by of tanks in downtown Tegucigalpa — against continuing the judicial process, while the armed forces commander, Gen. Luis Alonso Discua, has made it clear that as far as he is concerned the 10 are not guilty of anything.

Early signs are that the military, as usual, will get its way. The office of Judge Roy Medina, who is leading the judicial inquiry, has been shot at, and the judge has received a stream of death threats. Against that background, he has declined to issue arrest warrants for the men despite the prosecutor's request to do so. Instead, he has asked them only to answer questions.



Honduran soldiers on the streets of Tegucigalpa. In a rare display of defiance, judicial authorities have indicted 10 soldiers for human rights abuses

PHOTOGRAPH: NANCY McGIRR

The national human rights commissioner, meanwhile, has sent family members out of the country for their safety. Prosecutors handling the case have been threatened. The defense attorney, Carlos Lopez, said last week that his 10 clients refuse to appear before a judge to respond to the charges, citing a 1991 amnesty. Medina responded that they "must appear" for questioning. So far they have not.

Numerous Latin American nations have tried and failed to mete out justice for human rights abuses carried out by the state during the ideological wars of the past. In El Salvador, Chile and Haiti, for example, commissions have investigated abuses, but they did not have the power to prosecute or punish those found responsible.

In every case, including Honduras, investigations have been accompanied by broad amnesties. Defense attorney Lopez cited the Honduran amnesty for his clients, saying "it doesn't matter whether they are innocent or guilty. They have amnesty."

But the indictments here are the latest in a series of small but significant challenges to the military by the civilian government of President Carlos Reina, who took office 20 months ago. He has moved to abolish the draft and to shift the police from military to civilian control — both departures from Honduran tradition.

"They are all small steps," one diplomat said. "But a year ago, none of this seemed possible." Reina declined to be interviewed on these issues. His spokesman said any interview request must be submitted a month in advance along with written questions.

Discua called a press conference in August, shortly after the indictments, to say the military men "have my support and solidarity as well as the support and solidarity of the entire [military] institution." In an interview, Discua said the men were covered by the 1991 amnesty and "in reality, these 10 are absolved of any guilt." Discua, who was trained in intelligence operations by the United States, was the commander of Battalion 316 for several months in 1984.

"We have seen how these cases have recently been stirred up again, and we understand that is more a matter of policies from outside the country than inside," Discua said.

"It is the work of some groups that were, one way or another, involved here in the decade of the 1980s, where the East-West conflict was very much a part of Central America. The impact of that conflict led Honduras to be involved in this type of situation."

UNLIKE neighboring Nicaragua and El Salvador, Honduras never was a battleground in those wars. But the nation, with a per capita income of just $540 a year, became a central operating area for US military and CIA efforts to topple the Sandinistas in Nicaragua and to defeat the leftist insurgency in El Salvador. In Nicaragua and El Salvador, tens of thousands of civilians were tortured and killed by government forces. Here the Committee of Relatives of the Detained and Disappeared of Honduras documented 184 disappearances in the 1980s.

But across Central America, the military's officers and budget have remained largely outside civilian control, including aid money that the armed forces received during the 1980s. For Honduras and El Salvador, it came from the United States. For Nicaragua, it came from Cuba and the Soviet Bloc. In all three countries, the military and its branches set up pension funds and engage in a host of business activities that generate funds outside the national budget.

Throughout the 1980s there were numerous reports that the CIA and State Department were aware of Honduran military tactics of forced disappearances and torture of suspected leftists. But in December 1993, Leo Valladares, the national human rights commissioner, went further. He issued an unprecedented report accusing the Honduran military of responsibility for the murders, including accounts by brigade members who said they saw a CIA presence during some interrogations.

The report, entitled "The Facts Speak for Themselves," documented 14 "illustrative cases" of how Battalion 316 tortured and killed prisoners. It was the first time an agency of the government addressed the military's responsibility for the disappearances.

In August, Valladares also requested that the Clinton administration declassify information on the cases, as well as any information on Battalion 316, and on a list of officers who were involved with the unit. The next day, tanks rumbled through the streets of the capital, a move that many civilians interpreted as a show of force. Discua later said the army was merely warming up the engines in preparation for a military parade that took place a few days later.

Representative Robert G. Toricelli (Dem, New Jersey) is supporting the declassification. He revealed earlier this year that in Guatemala an officer accused of participating in the murder of a US citizen and others was on the CIA payroll.

"We support Honduran efforts to move the country out of an era of violence, secrecy and governmental impunity toward a stronger and more democratic society," said a September 12 letter to Clinton by Toricelli and eight other Democrats. "We believe the United States government can help in this critical transition."

A sense of the Senate resolution sponsored by Democratic Senators Patrick J. Leahy (Vermont), Christopher J. Dodd (Connecticut) and Paul S. Sarbanes (Maryland) was passed on September 20 urging declassification. It stated that "during the 1980s Battalion 316 engaged in a campaign of systematically kidnapping, torturing and murdering suspected subversives ... At the time, administration officials were aware of the activities of Battalion 316."

A Civil Liberty Not Worth Dying For

COMMENT
Richard Cohen

A PAROCHIAL high school in Washington recently held a dance, and I happened to pass it twice. The first time knots of kids were heading toward the dance. Many of them were smoking. The second time the kids were milling around outside. Once again, many of them were smoking. In loco parentis, I nearly went just plain loco.

Those kids are a tragedy in the making. Sooner or later, their smoking will catch up with them and some will die before their time. Most of them will become addicted since the teen-age years are when the habit seems to stick. Let a 13-year-old smoke and, in due course, you'll get one of the 418,000 people who annually die of diseases caused by the weed. I worry about those kids.

Ah, but I am instructed to worry more about the government's efforts to do something about those kids. In full-page newspaper ads, R. J. Reynolds shows a man, balding and casually dressed, being handcuffed and placed in a "Federal Anti Smoking Police" car. "The last thing our police forces want to worry about is America's 45 million smokers," says the ad. "Has the government got its prioroties right?"

No, is the only answer the proverbial reasonable man could offer. The ad puts its finger on a vile evil — not cigarette smoking, as you might think, but "big government solutions that have been proposed to curtail underage smoking ..." After all, the ad points out that the government has "not stopped crime, unemployment, the deficit or drugs." It's true. The government has not stopped crime, unemployment, the deficit or drugs. Sob.

I confess to grudging admiration of the tobacco industry's tenacity. Given that nothing good can be said about cigarettes, given that there is no question they are a health menace, I would have thought that shame alone would silence the industry and that, in repentance or atonement or some such thing it would, in fact, cooperate in its own dismantling. The least you can do, if you happen to be a tobacco industry executive, is turn over your fortune to charity and spend the rest of your life doing good works.

But the industry, instead, has turned on the government. It is fighting the Clinton administration's plans to prevent teen-age smoking. The White House wants to severely limit cigarette advertising, ban vending machine sales, prohibit the sponsorship of sporting or entertainment events by brand names of cigarettes (although not by the company itself) and declare cigarettes a drug delivery device.

None of this is needed, the tobacco industry says. It has declared its advertising ineffective — although for some reason it will persist in spending massively on advertising campaigns. "We all agree we must do something to keep cigarettes out of the hands of children under the age of eighteen," the newspaper ad says. "But the answer isn't more bureaucracy." It's teaching "young people how to resist peer pressure."

Scoff not, you cynics out there. The industry has a point. Something akin to peer pressure must explain why few black kids smoke while many white ones do — only 5 percent of black high school seniors vs. 23 percent of their white counterparts. Black role models — entertainment figures, sports stars — are rarely seen smoking. White movie stars, especially young ones, are often photographed with a cigarette. These fools are doing a lot of damage. Underage smoking is up — 30 percent since 1991 among eighth-graders alone.

But the newspaper ads are doing some damage of their own. They are cynical attempts to exploit anti-government sentiment and they make no sense whatsoever. Would the tobacco lobby argue that the government shouldn't regulate the sale and advertising of liquor? A better question: If the government didn't regulate the industry, would it regulate itself? A cynical answer: These guys would hand out samples at nursery school, if they were allowed.

The cigarette industry has suddenly become suspiciously American Civil Liberties Union-ish. But its reasons I suspect have more to do with making a buck than with civil liberties. It is attempting to make smoking the equivalent of a constitutional right — free speech, assembly and lighting up. As a quitter, I reject that argument. As a cause, it's not worth dying for.

Young Russians Flee Draft in Droves

David Hoffman in Moscow

BRAVING the cold, penetrating rain and early darkness, hundreds of mothers gathered under an archway in central Moscow recently, clutching notebooks or pamphlets. A few had lanky teen-age boys in tow, agony and anxiety shadowed in their faces.

Alexander Galperin, 17, stood stone-quiet next to his mother, Tatiana. "Russia doesn't need an army like this!" she said, her voice muffled but emotional. "The war is terrible. Our troops must be pulled out of Chechnya. Russian troops don't belong there ... My son has been ill — he's allergic to everything."

Alexander nodded and said simply, "I just don't want to go."

The autumn draft is under way in Russia, and it is a time of fear and loathing. The bloody war in the breakaway southern region of Chechnya has dragged on for nearly a year, conditions in the army have grown even more grave, and winter hardships are approaching.

The trickle of young men who once tried to dodge the draft has turned into a steady stream, while thousands more are desperately trying to get medical or student deferments to avoid military service.

The phenomenon of draft evasion is not only a reaction to the unpopular war in the Caucasus. It also mirrors the troubles rippling through Russian society nearly four years after the Soviet Union collapsed: contempt for institutions, absence of any motivating national pride or patriotism, rampant bribery and cheating, and, finally, the desperate straits of the Russian armed forces.

Soldiers have not been paid for months. Shortages of food plague remote garrisons. Cruel hazing of younger conscripts is commonplace. Soldiers often sell their weapons. And the army faces a crippling manpower shortage. Sergei Ivannikov, a military prosecutor, said in a television interview that "the fall and winter period is coming, and naturally soldiers are going to run away."

Russian soldiers warm themselves at a military dumpsite near the Chechen capital, Grozny. Many young men are desperately trying to avoid doing military service in the harsh conditions of the Caucasus

The situation is so dire that last week the Federation Council, the upper house of parliament, extended the service of current troops from 18 to 24 months, stunning short-timers who now have to serve through the winter. Col. Vladimir Uvatenko, a spokesman for the Defense Ministry, said that instead of discharging 230,000 men as planned this winter, the army will allow only 19,000 to go home.

According to Gen. Alexander Galkin, a member of the army's general staff, military manpower is at only 63 percent of the approved level, and any detachment or unit that falls below 75 percent "is not combat ready." Overall, he said, the strategic forces and air defense commands have 90 and 80 percent, respectively, of their authorized manpower but infantry levels are falling below 40 percent. "One man simply cannot perform several functions in battle," Galkin said.

The military hoped the fall recruitment campaign would boost its ranks to 77 percent of the authorized level by adding 224,000 soldiers, but there are signs that draft evasion is becoming even more widespread. In 1989, the Soviet Union listed 2,800 draft evaders. By this spring's call-up, the outright draft-dodging had mushroomed to 10 times that number, the Defense Ministry's Uvatenko said.

It is a reflection of the public mood that draft-dodging, or at least finding a way to wangle deferments, is a common topic of discussion today. In Moscow's Metro stations, women often sell literature, including copies of the military code, spelling out the complex regulations on the draft. It is also possible to openly purchase, for less than $2, a copy of the military's detailed instructions to doctors spelling out every possible ailment that qualifies youths for deferment. This document, once out of the reach of most people, is a valuable tool for those seeking to avoid service.

Peddlers sell the documents every Monday evening outside the offices of the Russian Committee of Soldiers' Mothers, a group established in 1989 to expose human rights violations in the army and help youths and mothers resist the draft.

The group's weekly "counseling" must be held on the street or in the alley because there is not enough room in its cramped offices. One reason for the intense interest is that the war in Chechnya has been widely publicized in Russian news media, far more than the Afghanistan conflict was featured in the controlled Soviet press.

While outright draft evasion carries the risk of penalties, thousands of young men and their parents try to find other ways to get deferments and exemptions, often illegally. Registration is carried out by local authorities and has become rife with corruption.

Valentina Melnikova, press secretary of the mothers' group, said the local committees often misplace critical documents or refuse to attach reports, just to extort more money from parents. And the parents are willing to pay. According to one Moscow mother, who did not want to be identified, it is simply a matter of finding the right doctor who, perhaps for $800, will sign papers certifying to some childhood illness on the deferment list. For a larger sum, about $5,000, it is possible to bribe local officials to grant a deferment. For those who are more desperate, there are clinics in Moscow that will "create" disqualifying health problems, such as a gastric ulcer, for a fee.

THE LIST of deferments is a labyrinth of exclusions, which has added to the confusion. Col. Gen. Vyacheslav Zherebtsov, head of the military's main enlistment department, commented recently that deferments or exemptions are available for outstanding liberal-arts students, sportsmen, students with diplomas working at key state-run enterprises, rural doctors, teachers, sick people, those with serious criminal records, those with two small children, those whose brothers were killed in action, those who have to look after parents suffering from major ailments, and others. He said 75 of every 100 draft-age men fit into one of the deferment categories.

The harsh conditions in the army have also stirred fear among parents and many young men. In addition to hunger and illness, stories of cruel hazing and drunken beatings from officers are common, and in recent years theft and drugs have been added to the hazards.

The average soldier earns between $2.60 and $5.30 a month.

Alexander Terekhov, a popular young author who has written fiction about the humiliation of military service, said fears of conscription come up constantly in his conversations with readers.

"Frankly speaking, two years in the army today equals two years in prison camp," he said. "Today, there is easier access to weapons and drugs and less respect for human life. When I was there, we had humiliation and stupidity, but we had respect for human life."

A Literary Light Goes Out in Sarajevo

John Pomfret in Sarajevo

TWO WEEKS ago, suffering from a mammoth hangover after days of boozy farewells, Semezdin Mehmedinovic, disheveled and a bit grim, shoved his papers in front of a gantlet of Bosnian police, customs officers, state security toughs, French guards, a Russian U.N. police officer, his Jordanian colleague and Norwegian soldiers from an organization called Movement Control.

After explaining to another U.N. official with a New York accent that no, he did not have a flak jacket or a helmet with which to board the plane but that was OK because he was a local boy and what's another dead local boy anyway, Mehmedinovic was given passage into a dimly lit waiting room. An hour or two later, following another laborious round of checks and prods by U.N. men, he trudged onto the tarmac of Sarajevo's airport and into a Russian-made Ilyushin.

Minutes later, the U.N. airplane flew him out of his home town. His final destination? The United States. His professional goal? "Maybe I'll be a waiter," Mehmedinovic said.

The departure of Semezdin Mehmedinovic, writer and poet, coffee fiend and urban cowboy, was a sad day for Sarajevo. If anyone had encapsulated the struggle to save the soul of this cultural crossroads, it was Mehmedinovic.

His book of short stories, "Sarajevo Blues," is widely considered here to be the best piece of writing to emerge from this besieged capital since Bosnia's war erupted in April 1992. Written as a series of vignettes, it casts the wry, existential eye of a 20th-century man on the Bosnian Serbs' medieval-style siege. Absent is any of the pious self-righteousness that has infected much of the literary work of the intellectuals here.

Mehmedinovic is one of an estimated 25,000 Sarajevans who have left the besieged part of this city in the past three months in the biggest exodus from here since the war began, according to high court statistics published last week in Sarajevo's leading magazine, War Days. His departure is part of a massive shift in the ethnic and cultural mosaic of this city that, while it started in 1992, has accelerated recently as more and more intellectuals and skilled people like Mehmedinovic have come to the conclusion that their city and country have changed beyond repair.

Now, with the prospect that the city's siege could be lifted and a peace deal reached following negotiations scheduled to begin in the United States on October 31, the flow from the city is expected to increase. While the West may hope that a settlement is in sight for Europe's bloodiest conflict since World War II, the killing and conflagration here have so changed Bosnia's political and social landscape that many Bosnians don't want to stay.

According to official statistics, Sarajevo had 1,991 engineers and other highly skilled technical professionals before the war; today it has 733. The Academy of Arts and Sciences of Bosnia-Herzegovina had 48 members before the war; today just 16. Almost 2,000 people were on the faculty of the University of Sarajevo when fighting broke out; now there are half that many. Ballet dancers have spun away, their numbers dropping from 60 to 14. Fifteen of 60 choir singers remain.

Significantly, the flight from Sarajevo finds echoes on the Serb-held portion of this city, where neighborhoods that once were filled with skilled workers, engineers, doctors and lawyers now either stand empty or have been filled with poor, uneducated Serbs who, like the Muslim refugees from the countryside of eastern Bosnia who have flooded the other side of the city, are the cannon fodder of this nationalistic war.

But statistics from Serb-held Sarajevo are either unavailable or secret; the self-proclaimed Bosnian Serb state maintains the ruse that Serbs who have a choice actually want to stay there.

Population statistics have been a weapon of the war in Bosnia. Each side feels that the more people it controls, the stronger its claim to the mantle of power. Since the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees accepts — unchallenged — each side's population statistics in deciding how much humanitarian aid to dole out, the rival parties inflate those figures to get more food for their armies.

Sarajevo authorities, for example, say that 380,000 people live here. By U.N. estimates, the number is less than 250,000. While the Serb side claims 150,000 people inhabit "Serb Sarajevo," the U.N. figure is less than half that.

On both sides of the line, almost every young educated person asked says he or she is planning to leave. Relatives in Kansas, a cousin in Canada, a dream life in California beckon to anyone with a degree or a skill.

"Did you hear they're looking for dermatological aides in South Africa?" one woman exclaimed the other day to a friend at Sarajevo's market.

The chief editor of War Days, Senad Pecanin, said the departure aids nationalists on both sides on Sarajevo's divide: The people who are leaving are the ones who could form the foundations for a democratic state. The only way to stay in besieged Sarajevo and be an intellectual, he said, is to join the Muslim Party of Democratic Action. The same is true on the other side, where the party of choice is the Serbian Democratic Party of Radovan Karadzic, a militant Serb nationalist and indicted war criminal.

"The indolence of the authorities to this exodus has been more tragic for the future of Sarajevo than all the Serb shells fired on the city," Pecanin wrote. "Unlike the earlier departure, this flight comprises people who were not scared away by Serb shells but pushed out by a belief that there is no future here."

GUARDIAN WEEKLY
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Cyclone Warning

John Simon

TESTAMENTS BETRAYED
An Essay in Nine Parts
By Milan Kundera
Translated from the French
by Linda Asher
HarperCollins, 280pp. $24

MILAN KUNDERA's self-styled "Essay in Nine Parts," Testaments Betrayed, is an intelligent reader's delight and a conscientious reviewer's headache. Even those familiar with the novelist's previous essay in seven parts, The Art Of The Novel, will be dazzled afresh by this expanded traversal of much the same territory, but with numerous side trips. That the concerns are similar should be no surprise: Kundera's mind is like a hurricane circling furiously around the same center, while slowly progressing in unpredictable directions.

Although the nine parts have vaguely unifying heads, these, like the overarching title, Testaments Betrayed, only dimly convey the startling, hilarious, and provocative goings-on in this book that refuses containment in any category, thematic or stylistic, and scorns all rules — even self-imposed ones. The work is not a cohesive theory or historical demonstration (though it encompasses some of that as well), but an almost aphoristic display of elegance, mordancy, and mind-dilating insights. These come at you at the relentless pace of a video game but, once lodged in your brain, defy uprooting. The method — if that is the word for such inspired improvisation — is the *aperçu* (often a dazzling epiphany), the maxim (always perfectly chiseled), and the epigram (as biting as it is cherishable). What a quandary for the scrupulous reviewer who feels morally compelled to quote several passages from almost every one of 280 pages!

All right. The ostensible subject is the variety of artistic betrayals: how writers and composers have been misunderstood, misrepresented, even sabotaged by their very friends, followers and colleagues. This applies powerfully to the sentimentalization of Kafka by Max Brod; to the edulcoration, the sweetening, of Janacek's music by his own disciples and cloddish conductors, to the attempt of the conductor, Ernest Ansermet to fiddle with his friend Stravinsky's music, and the incomprehension of same by such a politically prejudiced musicologist as the mighty Theodor Adorno; to the autobiography-oriented misreadings of Hemingway's work by an overzealous academic biographer; and to poor translations of Kafka's writings. Other instances of interference — religious, political, or merely benighted — crop up sporadically, but are less compelling.

A more useful schema is provided by the author's division of the history of the novel — and, more or less in parallel, that of music — into the two halves of a soccer game and one overtime. We get penetrating assessments of the great scorers of the first half: Rabelais, Cervantes, and some others to whom plot and humor mattered most. The second half features the romantic and realistic novelists, for most of whom Kundera has more respect than enthusiasm, though with noteworthy exceptions, such as, this time 'round, Tolstoy. In the overtime — the modern period — there are many star players: Kafka, Broch, Musil, Faulkner, Hemingway, Gombrowicz and several more. Similarly, there are expert and illuminating comments (with musical examples) on the first half-game of music from the early polyphonists to Bach; on the second half, where the concern is mostly with the innovations of Beethoven and Chopin's timeless terseness; and on the overtime, where — after fine examinations of Janacek and Stravinsky-Berg, Bartok, Schoenberg, Webern, Satie, Debussy, and Poulenc also get the nod.

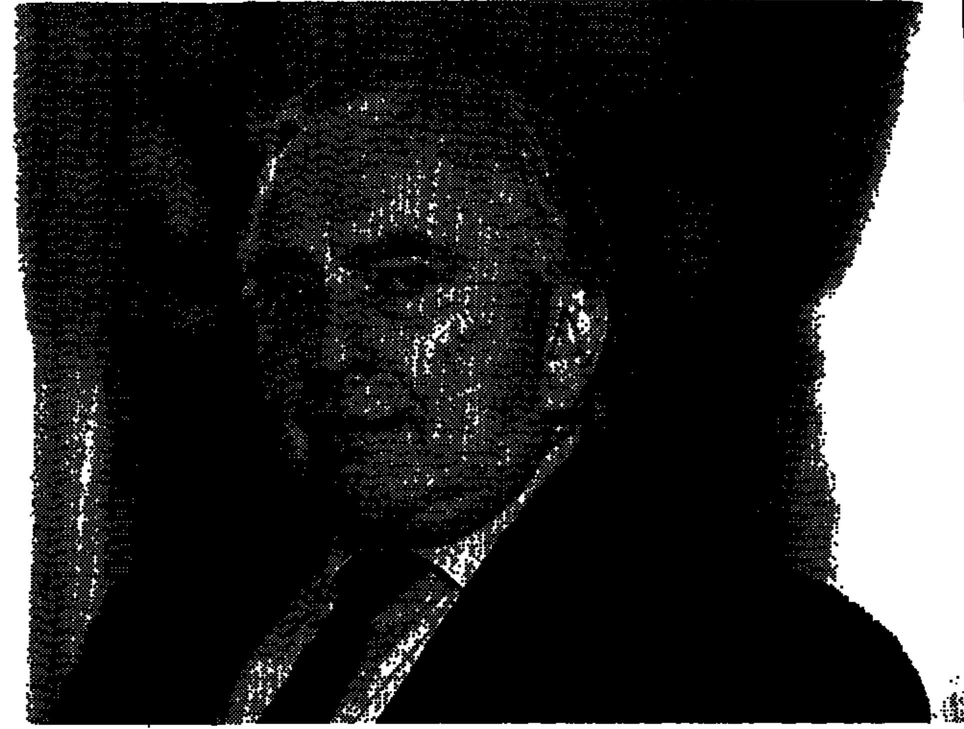
The relationship between literature and music proves mutually revelatory, even as it provides a nice counterpoint to Kundera's structure. Kundera also brings in the fine arts, history, philosophy (Nietzsche and Heidegger figure prominently), and much political observation based on bitter personal experience. He is that fine and endangered species, the true man of letters who can roam unconfined across all the arts, and beat the experts at their own game. In America, only Edmund Wilson and Lionel Trilling fully qualify, but even they mostly on the literary side; ambidextrously, in both music and literature, only Charles Rosen, Ned Rorem and Robert Craft, though their emphasis is chiefly musical. Yet no one can match the resonance of Kundera's style. And because Kundera's polydextrousness (as it were) spews up so many quotable quotes, rather than shortchanging it, I throw in the towel and say: Go check it out for yourselves.

Which is not to say that this multifarious screed against the moralizing and sentimentalizing of art is without its little flaws. Thus Kundera, like so many artists, brooks no competition among the living, and so praises only such lesser talents as Rushdie, Fuentes, Vancura and Chamoiseau, whose work his own easily outdistances. He is also a bit cavalier about details.

Thus he refers to his beloved Janacek's Mladi (Youth) as the Sextet for Wind Instruments, though the composer called it a suite. He complains of not finding, in 1992, Janacek's Amarus on CD, though Supraphon brought it out in 1985, albeit together with a work by Martinu, whom he does not seem to appreciate.

AGAIN, he says Janacek caught his fatal cold chasing after his beloved's "children" straying in the woods; actually, it was only the oldest son. He attributes the saying "truer than the truth" to Hemingway, though it stems from Anatole France's Le Jardin d'Epicure. He rightly prefers Musil's fiction to his essays, but might not so condescend to the latter had he really read them. Yet such minor blemishes should not give us pause, least of all in Linda Asher's highly readable translation (alas, not entirely free from semantic and grammatical errors).

Finally, Kundera's insights go beyond his immediate subjects to concern themselves with existential issues of interest to everyone. Testaments Betrayed is to be savored paragraph by paragraph, and should not be borrowed from friends or lending libraries. Rather — even if you have to borrow, beg, or steal the money — it must be purchased, read, pondered and argued with in the margins. And frequently reread.



Rising to the challenge: Gore Vidal's account of his first 39 years may be the best book of his career so far

The World, the Flesh and Vidal

Jonathan Yardley

PALIMPSEST
A Memoir
By Gore Vidal
Random House. 435pp. $27.50

THE "earliest meaning of palimpsest," Gore Vidal reminds us at the outset of this memoir, is "Paper, parchment, etc., prepared for writing on and wiping out again, like a slate." This, as he says, "is pretty much what my kind of writer does anyway. Starts with life; makes a text; then a re-vision — literally, a second seeing, an afterthought, erasing some but not all of the original while writing something new over the first layer of text."

Thus we have the title of the book Vidal for years said he would never write. He thought for a while of calling it "A Tissue of Lies" — indeed that could serve as the generic title for all memoirs — but chose instead one that reflects both his own habits as a writer and the ways in which memory shapes and reshapes as the years pass and one's perspective changes. It is a good choice. Vidal has risen to it with what may well be the best book of his long, erratic and interesting career.

Palimpsest is the story not of Vidal's entire life — he turned 70 this month — but of its first 39 years. This may seem at first glance a characteristically contrary cutting-off point, but it is exactly the right place to stop. As Vidal came to the end of his fourth decade he also closed off the most public period of his life, during which he had been a successful playwright, a habitue of Hollywood and a marginal figure in Democratic Party politics. In the mid-'60s he walked away from all that and returned to "what I liked to do," writing novels, "even though it had been clear to me for quite some time that the novel as an art form — much less diversion — was of no great interest to the public at large and of too great an interest to academics in pursuit of theory."

However one may feel about the fruits of Vidal's novelistic endeavors, what is indisputable is that his life lost much of the memoirist's stock in trade — prurient interest — once he went back to his desk. A keen student of storytelling, Vidal knows, though he does not mention it here, that private turmoil and public provocation make splendid stories, while laboring away in one's office makes no story at all.

In truth those four decades contain the raw material for a far longer book than the quite long one Vidal has written. He was the child of a stupendously dysfunctional family; the grandson of a flamboyant senator, Thomas Pryor Gore of Oklahoma, and the stepbrother-in-law of a president, John Fitzgerald Kennedy; he had a voracious homoerotic appetite that led him, by age 25, to "more than a thousand sexual encounters"; he moved among literary high-fliers, making friends and/or enemies of Tennessee Williams and Anais Nin and Truman Capote and Paul Bowles and innumerable others, about whom he collected delicious and sometimes vicious anecdotes; he wrote two popular plays ("The Best Man" and "Visit to a Small Planet"), many television shows and movies, and nearly won election to Congress as a Democrat in a New York district notorious for its hard-arteried Republicanism.

How this came to pass is told with Vidal's customary fluidity but with his malicious, or catty, side somewhat subdued. Still, temptation cannot always be resisted. Thus we have this glimpse of Tennessee Williams, to whom Vidal was devoted and whom he called the Glorious Bird: "I have just recalled Tennessee's aversion to sex with other writers or, indeed, with intellectuals of any kind. 'It is most disturbing, to think that the head beside you on the pillow might be thinking, too,' said the Bird, who had a gift for selecting fine bodies attached to heads usually filled with the bright confetti of lunacy." Then there was Truman Capote, to whom Vidal was not devoted:

"The instant lie was Truman's art form, small but, paradoxically, authentic. One could watch the process. A famous name would be mentioned. The round pale fetus face would suddenly register a sort of tic, as if a switch had been thrown. 'Eleanor Roosevelt. Oh, I know her intimately! I was with her when Franklin died, she hated him you know, and of course she was in love with Marlene. In fact, she and Marlene and I were together in Marlene's suite at the Pierre when, suddenly, Eleanor came rushing in — oh, she was so big — stark naked too — from the bedroom, to say that the president was dead, so Marlene . . .' To watch Capote's face as he added detail after detail was to observe the raw creative process in all its primal fury."

This is Vidal at his most devastating, connoisseurs of which will find enough in Palimpsest to satisfy if not fully slake their thirst. Yet beneath the brilliantly brittle surface under which Vidal is at times content to coast, Palimpsest deals with more serious matters. The degree to which Vidal is haunted by family has long been clear from his personal essays, but here he leaves no doubt that the scars he received at the hearth were deep and ineradicable. His father, of whom he was fond, "was restless, curious, inventive," and inconsistently attentive. His mother, whom he hated, was mean, vindictive, avaricious and selfish — in a word, "trouble."

VIDAL seems, indeed, to have genuinely loved only one person, Jimmy Trimble, a St. Albans schoolmate with whom he had several boyish sexual encounters and who was killed, at age 19, on Iwo Jima. In contemplating Jimmy Trimble from the remove of more than half a century, Vidal is at one with Keats, contemplating his Grecian urn and a love "For ever warm and still to be enjoyed,/ For ever panting and for ever young." As Vidal puts it: "I had wanted to recreate him through memory, the ultimate possession as well as the last memorial. But tombs are best left shut."

A childhood love is most often precisely that, and efforts to reawaken it most often deal more in fancy than in fact; this seems true when Vidal writes about a boy who now is more a creature of memory and will than a human who once lived. But whatever the truth of the matter, Palimpsest leaves no doubt that "the first human happiness that I had ever encountered" has sustained Vidal over the years; public acknowledgement of this may not have been easy, but it strikes a poignant note amid all the clang and clamor to which Vidal has accustomed us. If that seems out of character, Palimpsest reminds us that Vidal is a creature of "infinite surprise."

GUARDIAN WEEKLY
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Uranium sales put Australia on the spot

Florence de Changy in Sydney

'AS SOON as the resumption of the French nuclear tests was announced, we pointed out that there wasn't the least connection between the tests and the uranium we're selling to France," said Philip Shirvington, managing director of Energy Resources of Australia (ERA), one of the country's two uranium producers.

Yet the subject has sparked a sharp debate in the country. The left-wing section of the Australian Labor Party, the Australian Council of Trade Unions, democrats and green parties have turned uranium sales to France into an issue. Polls show that 75 per cent of the public oppose the sales.

Although Australia has 30 per cent of the world's uranium stocks, it has only a 10 per cent share of the international market. Total production is controlled by the "three mines" policy that Labor adopted in 1984, which restricted the working of uranium deposits to three mines. One of the mines was exhausted five years ago. The other two produced 2,632 tonnes of uranium in 1994.

The 272 tonnes of uranium that ERA sells to France every year goes to the French public power utility, EDF. Australia is the major partner in ERA, holding 75 per cent of its stock. European stockholders (including France's Cogedim with 7.5 per cent) have 14.5 per cent, and the Japanese 10.5 per cent.

Under a contract signed in 1988, which ends in 2001, France buys the uranium at a price above market rates. The Australian foreign minister, Gareth Evans, has pointed out that France would save up to A$40 million (£19 million) by buying the uranium at world market prices.

Confronted by the qualms of public opinion in Australia and given the high price at which it is buying Australian uranium, France pre-empted reactions by indicating as early as August 4 that it was prepared to terminate the contract.

"Nice move, but we're not playing along with that," a senior civil servant in Canberra said at the time. For its part, ERA has warned that if the Australian government stopped the sales to France, it would claim compensation.

Canberra finds itself caught between what it would like to do and what it can do. At the Labor Party congress in New South Wales early this month, the prime minister, Paul Keating, obtained a unanimous vote for a motion condemning all future sales of uranium to France. It was a purely symbolic gesture, for the current contract has so far not been called into question.

This is not enough to satisfy the environmental lobbies, which are castigating the government's "hypocrisy" and pressing Canberra to call off the sales.

"Keating described the first test as stupid," notes the militant monthly Socialist Alternative, "but the Labor government has already earned A$3 billion exporting yellowcake all over the world".

For its part, the dockers' union has begun delaying shipments of uranium, and this has prompted the French ambassador to inform the Australian government that if uranium shipments continued to be delayed, France would consider calling off the contract.

While some activists are suspected of taking advantage of the anti-nuclear mood to win votes for the anti-uranium cause, one mining industrialist has pointed out that the government "cannot afford to indulge in too much posturing and run the risk of alarming other big customers like Japan".

With demand rising in Asia, major reserves preserved for the moment and a market price that appears to be firming, the future of Australian uranium seems assured. Whatever the outcome of the next federal elections, the "three mines" policy will have to be reviewed or eased.

(October 18)

Haiti strives to prove itself a democracy

Jean-Michel Caroit in Port-au-Prince

THE flood of Haitian boat people that United States officials dreaded has subsided. The US coastguard has rounded up fewer refugees in the past year than it did in a single day at the height of the exodus in the summer of 1994. The White House sees this as an endorsement of the policy that allowed Haiti's elected president, Jean-Bertrand Aristide, to return to Haiti and restore democracy.

President Bill Clinton shares the success with the UN peacekeepers who took over from the US troops just over six months ago. The departure of the UN contingent, planned for next February, will test whether or not Haiti's young democracy has managed to take hold.

Shortly before the celebration of the first anniversary of Aristide's return, the Republican senator Robert Dole mounted an attack to stop aid to the island. Dole, who is a candidate for the presidency, attacked both what he said were attempts to set up a one-party system and the political killings masterminded by a "member of the government heading a death squad".

"In private, everybody is begging us to stay on after February, including members of the anti-Aristide middle class who have never made so much money," confided an official of the UN mission in Haiti.

As a result of the crisis in Bosnia and the UN's financial difficulties, it has had to cut back on peacekeeping operations. Clinton has, however, expressed the hope that UN forces remain in Haiti "until democracy triumphs", an implicit suggestion that it hasn't done so yet.

The most striking improvement during the past year has been human rights. The days of summary executions and torture are over. The policy of national reconciliation that Mr Aristide is pursuing has put an end to acts of vengeance.

The dismantling of the army has removed a major impediment to democracy. But will the new Haitian police force, trained by American, Canadian and French instructors be in a position to maintain law and order after the blue helmets leave? So far, 1,500 newly trained policemen have been deployed in the capital. The figure is expected to reach 5,000 by next February.

Other signs of the successful transition to democracy are that public protests are tolerated and political opponents are no longer afraid to criticise the government. Journalists are not censored. However, the national radio and television service, which is managed by the information minister, Henri-Claude Ménard, is having difficulty adapting to open debate. During the summer parliamentary election campaign, for example, the state media crudely tilted in favour of the Lavalas coalition supported by Aristide.

"Our great challenge is to show that the country is governable," said Gérard Pierre-Charles, founder and ideologue of the Lavalas Political Organisation (OPL), which controls parliament. Parliamentary and local government elections have not helped to clear the political atmosphere. The opposition took advantage of irregularities in the first round of voting to try to discredit the country's first electoral test since returning to democracy.

For the first time, voters did not respond to Aristide's call and stayed away in droves from the two elections that dragged on more than three months.

With only a few weeks to go before the presidential election due to be held in December, no creditable candidate has come forward. And leading opposition figures have cast doubts on the impartiality of the electoral council.

Nobody knows which candidate Aristide will endorse. The names of several potential presidential heirs are being mentioned — Aristide's former prime minister, René Préval; a loyal supporter in foreign affairs, Claudette Werleigh; and a distant relative of the president, Jean-Marie Chérestal, who is in charge of international co-operation.



Despite public calls to stay in office for another three years, Aristide has declared that he wants to step down in February. He has made this promise to Clinton and it is a decision that can only help him. It will endorse him as the founder of Haitian democracy and, at the same time, he can continue to exercise an influence through his successor.

No one doubts he will run again in five years' time. If he is successful then, he will preside over the ceremonies marking the bicentenary of Haiti's independence in 2004.

Meanwhile, his successor will have to cope with an economic situation that is far from easy, despite international aid, and will inherit the prickly question of privatisation.

The prime minister, Smarck Michel, who has been severely criticised by the Lavalas spokesman and the people around Aristide, is the strongest advocate of privatising public enterprises and doing a deal with the International Monetary Fund (IMF). His fate has become a test case for the international community.

If Aristide keeps him, he will strengthen the hand of the privatisation lobby. If he accepts his resignation, the president will feed rumours that his advisers are secretly encouraging protests against privatisation and the IMF.

(October 19)

Le Pen seeks apology for 'slander'

Guy Porte in Marseilles

FRESH testimony is casting new light on the desecration of a Jewish cemetery in Carpentras (Var) in May 1990. It has also thrown the Vaucluse sub-prefecture into turmoil and is giving Jean-Marie Le Pen's National Front an opportunity to go on the political offensive.

Jean-Michel Tissot, the new public prosecutor in Carpentras, believes the crime was locally instigated rather than the work of the extreme right, which was thought to have been responsible. Le Pen is organising a "national gathering" in Carpentras on November 11 to demand an apology from the government for the "conspiracy" against his party.

Madeleine Germon, the widow of Félix Germon, aged 80, whose body was taken out of its grave on the night of the desecration, a week after it was buried, is certain she knows what really happened. "Many people know the truth," she says, "They should now speak up."

Clues pointing to a youthful prank, which were followed up at the start of the inquiry, were soon dismissed in favour of political motives. The testimony recently given by Sylvie Mottes, aged 18 at the time of the incident, has now revived the original line of inquiry.

Mottes, questioned by the police on August 28, and later by an investigating magistrate on September 12 and October 13, said a group of young people from the town desecrated the cemetery during a session of gruesome role-playing.

The young woman, who as a girl hung around with the teenagers in question, did not herself take part in the desecration, but got the story from friends at her former school. She says six youngsters were involved. Their names have been bandied about in Carpentras for a long time and they are said to be from the town's *haute bourgeoisie*. Since that night, three of them are reported to have died in traffic accidents.

The witness has filled in the details of the game the young people were playing, alleging that all the participants were under the influence of drugs. She also links them to sexual practices involving adults and children, as well as the death of a schoolgirl, Alexandra Berrus, found unconscious outside her home in May 1992. The public prosecutor considers the statements "worthy of interest".

The National Front has been quick to react. After meeting the young woman's family, Le Pen said he would speak publicly on November 11.

"They have lied to the French people about the Carpentras incident," said the National Front's Bruno Mégret. "The government must apologise for the lies it has spread."

(October 19)

Afghan rebels clamp down on women

The Taliban movement is imposing a strict Islamic order in the parts of the country it controls, writes **Bruno Philip** in Herat

AS SOON as Taliban rebels seized control of Herat, the capital of western Afghanistan that had been in the grip of Islamic fundamentalists for three years, they imposed an even stricter Islamic order.

Women are the main target of these "student-soldiers", who have been notching up military victories for a year. Since they took the city last month, women no longer have the right to work or attend school. The city's educational establishments — shut down when this western stronghold of President Burhanuddin Rabbani fell to the Taliban — have since been re-opened, but not to girls.

"We want to set up a government based on the precepts of the holy Koran and the Prophet's recommendations," explains Sayed Abdul Malek, who is in charge of the movement's "foreign relations".

Young Malek wears an imposing turban and has a beard. His loose shirt and baggy trousers further disguise what he really looks like. "The Book," he says, "stipulates that women should not mix with men either at work or in school. If they want to study, they can do so at home under their husbands' supervision."

Herat fell on September 5 without a real fight. A few bursts of machine-gun and light arms fire were heard in the middle of the night, and the few remaining supporters of the former emir, Ismail Khan, fled across the border into neighbouring Iran and found refuge with their leader in the eastern Iranian city of Mashad.

The following morning, Herat's residents discovered they had new masters — young soldiers without uniforms, but all wearing beards and turbans, with Kalashnikovs slung across their shoulders. They drove into the city crammed into Toyota pick-up trucks flying white flags bearing the inscription: "There is no God but God."

Up to now, the militiamen have remained calm and disciplined, obeying the instructions the movement's leaders have given them.

"We haven't come here as colonists, but to help our brothers," says Mullah Mohammed Abbas, the new deputy governor, who was holding audience in the ousted emir's deserted palace. "Whether we're Pathans [Pashtuns] or Tajiks, we're all sons of Afghanistan. What we wanted was to topple Ismail Khan. We have ordered our men not to wreak vengeance on civilians.

"Ismail Khan wasn't a good Muslim. He was only interested in fighting. He forcibly inducted young men into his army and used the peasant farmers' money to pay for his wars. What's more, the reason he got out of the city so quickly was that he had lost the people's support."

As a prominent figure in the resistance against the Soviet-backed regime, Ismail Khan was hailed as a hero in Herat after the Afghan government fell to the mojahedin rebels. However, the emir appears to have gradually lost his heroic shine, and his continual warring with factions opposed to the Rabbani government — whose regional ally he was — did not allow him to fulfil his promises.

Increasing difficulties with Kabul's strongman, Ahmed Shah Massoud, another hero of the anti-Soviet resistance, apparently hastened his fall. Massoud is said to have relieved Ismail Khan of his official duties the day before the Taliban captured Herat.

"Nobody likes the Taliban. It's a shame to see such obscurantists holding power on the threshold of the 21st century," says Abdul, a former government employee. "The whole world couldn't care less." Like many other Heratis, he sees the fundamentalist militias as a rabble of uncouth peasants "who can't even speak the language correctly".



Afghan women queue for bread: under the Taliban they cannot work or study PHOTOGRAPH: PAUL O'DRISCOLL

The Taliban are trying to look like peacemakers keeping apart the former resistance movement's rival factions. They owe some of their success to the fact that practically everybody has become exasperated with the mojahedin factions, which have not stopped squabbling almost from the day they emerged from the underground.

BUT THE Taliban have quickly succeeded in becoming unpopular in a city like Herat, which is their most recent conquest. Their extreme bigotry has offended everybody — from the *bazaari* in his Astrakhan hat sipping green tea in a caravanserai at the old market, to the smooth-shaven, traditional monarchist, communist government employee, and turbaned old intellectual quietly reiterating his unshakeable respect for Islamic traditions.

"Why stop women from studying or working?" asks one of them. "So many men have died in this long war . . . Nowhere is it said in the Koran that our wives and sisters should remain hidden away."

When Herat's new masters tried to make young men cut their hair, rumour has it that a riot almost broke out. In any event, the "students of religion" decided to beat a cautious retreat and not force the issue.

If people can, at a pinch, go along with women forced to cover up, along with the banning of music, gambling and dog fights, nobody understands the Taliban's rigid insistence that women be shut out of public life, particularly since senior fundamentalist officials of the former regime had already agreed to impose the veil on women.

"The Taliban are reasonable people," says the head of the city's telecommunications department with a smile. There is no electricity here and telephones to the world outside don't work.

"If they want to intervene between the military factions, that's fine," says a teacher of literature who sells vegetables in the evenings to supplement his meagre monthly salary of $10. "But aren't they themselves becoming another of these factions that are encouraging the war?"

Meanwhile, women can still be seen walking in the streets, grey-blue shadows moving in the dust turned into a golden haze by the setting sun. Only a dark flash of eyes can be seen through a slit in the their veils. Some women are reported to be carrying on work in government departments. The new authorities have had no choice but to allow women nurses and doctors to continue working.

Representatives of international organisations based in Herat recently interrupted a meeting with the "bearded men" to protest against their policy towards women. Andreas Werner, head of the Médecins du Monde medical mission in the city, says: "We can no longer give our courses at the nursing school, because we have no students."

(October 13)

Irians resign themselves to 'Javanisation'

A resistance movement against Indonesia, which has found little international support, appears to be petering out. **Jean-Pierre Clerc** reports from Port Moresby

THE BURNING of an Indonesian flag last month in Madang, in Papua New Guinea, has focused attention on an organisation for Papuan independence — OPM — which has been conducting a sporadic guerrilla campaign since 1970 against Jakarta's rule in Irian Jaya, the western half of the island of New Guinea.

Though this half of New Guinea became an Indonesian province in 1969, it has not stopped ordinary people from continuing to call it "Western Papua". The flag-burning incident reflects a situation that is causing unease in Papua New Guinea, which became an independent state in 1975.

"We recognise Irian Jaya as an integral part of Indonesia and tolerate no action or declaration in favour of its independence," declared Gabriel Dusava, secretary general of the PNG foreign ministry.

Port Moresby's position is made easier by the United Nations endorsement in 1969 of the West Irian people's "free choice" in favour of Indonesia after Jakarta's troops had been present in the country for six years. Papua New Guinea was still Australian territory at the time.

Nevertheless, the local press carries frequent reports of human rights violations by Indonesian troops in Irian Jaya. The bishop of Jayapura, the province's capital, recently said that about a dozen people were executed by Indonesian soldiers in late spring near the Freeport copper mine. The National Council of Indonesian Churches reported on October 2 that 37 civilians and members of the independence movement were assassinated between June 1994 and February 1995.

After years of on-and-off militancy, the OPM is now concentrating its activities around the Freeport area. Observers in Port Moresby say, however, that Indonesia has revised its methods of combating a badly organised and poorly equipped OPM — for a long time it was fighting mainly with no more than bows and arrows — in an effort to deflect criticism by vigilant human rights groups.

Even though there is still some uneasiness about the way in which the western part of the island became an Indonesian province, the OPM has practically no support outside the country. Moses Werror, its representative in Madang, said it had just one office — in Sweden.

Relations between Papua New Guinea and Indonesia have been regulated since 1986 by a treaty of "mutual respect, friendship and co-operation". They worsened in 1984 when Indonesia crushed an uprising launched by the OPM, causing thousands to flee to Papua New Guinea.

Today, there are bilateral commissions that handle disputes related to the 750km north-south border agreed by the British and the Dutch in the 19th century.

Tension increased in the early 1980s in Irian Jaya when Jakarta started speeding up the settlement of hundreds of thousands of Javanese from their overcrowded island into a practically empty province (less than 1 million Irians live in an area the size of France).

With official backing, the newcomers took over the ancestral lands of the native tribes living in the western part of New Guinea. On top of this, the small core of Irian urban élite in the capital, Jayapura, whom the Dutch had trained during the final phase of their colonial government (1942-62), found itself supplanted by migrants in the public services and the economic sector. Things are further complicated by the fact that the newcomers are Muslim, while the native Irians are Christian.

With an increasing number of refugees volunteering to return home, the UN is considering shutting down a camp at East Awin in the extreme west of Papua New Guinea, where a few thousand refugees have been living since 1984.

Ordinary people in Papua New Guinea sympathise with their "Melanesian brothers" in Irian Jaya who are subjected to an increasing Javanisation that is wrenching the western half of the island from the Pacific and its roots and propelling it towards an Asian world of which it has culturally never been a part.

This explains the sudden bursts of support for the "cause". But Papua New Guinea has other things to worry about, such as the secession of a part of its territory, Bougainville island, which it has been trying to regain since 1989.

One abiding preoccupation, whipped up by the invasion of East Timor, is that Indonesia — which has never been cleared of the accusation of expansionism — may be waiting for the moment Papua New Guinea's cohesion is threatened. In July, the daily Post Courier reported that Australia and Indonesia had held unofficial talks about what to do if Papua New Guinea broke up. Canberra denied this, but not quickly enough to avoid a tart reaction from a minister and a member of parliament close to Sir Julius Chan, Papua New Guinea's prime minister.

Relations between Australia and Indonesia, the leading players in this part of the world, have always been complicated. Canberra, which regards Papua New Guinea as a shield against the perceived "threat" from Asia, cannot stop taking an interest in the large island close to its Northern Territory, even though this sometimes brings charges of "neo-colonialism" from Port Moresby.

(October 15/16)

Not drowning, but waving

Patrick Jarreau analyses Alain Juppé's prospects as French prime minister now that he no longer faces prosecution in the scandal over his 'cheap' Paris flat

LIONEL JOSPIN, in an aside during the Socialist Party's national convention on October 14, which elected him leader by a thumping 94 per cent majority, referred to the scandal over Prime Minister Alain Juppé's Paris flat (Juppé had allegedly used his position on the city council in 1989 to obtain a luxury council flat at a rent well below the going rate).

Jospin argued that a problem of that kind was not at all the same thing as a political crisis. And he was right. No sooner had the news broken that the Paris public prosecutor would not start proceedings against Juppé for "interference", which would have resulted in his being charged and having to resign, than he firmly re-established his credentials as prime minister.

Rescued from death by judicial drowning, he scrambled on to the terra firma of pure political debate and lost no time in staking out his ground. Since Juppé is the only person who can reasonably claim to lead a government that has not been reshuffled since it was formed after May's presidential election, his position as prime minister has been implicitly confirmed.

To crown everything, Juppé got elected on October 15 as president of the Gaullist Rassemblement pour la République (RPR), the main party in the ruling coalition, with a majority almost as thumping as Jospin's (93 per cent).

Although there is no question of replacing Juppé as prime minister, the possibility of a substantial government reshuffle has been aired, and President Jacques Chirac is reported to have told colleagues that it remains on the agenda.

The question people are asking is whether the judiciary's decision not to take the matter further — in other words to refrain from bringing down a government because its leader committed a peccadillo — will be sufficient to restore Juppé's authority and enable him to inject new life into what has been a lacklustre political performance.

The answer given by Juppé, who feels confident he can make a comeback, is in the affirmative. But his view is not shared by, for example, his fellow Gaullist Pierre Mazeaud, president of the legislation committee of the national assembly, who argued recently in favour of a more competent government with fewer ministers and greater fighting spirit.

But if there is to be no political crisis, only one conclusion can be drawn from the public prosecutor's decision, and that is that things will go on as before, or rather rev up again at the point where they had ground to a halt.

Yet it is arguable that the so-called "judicial" crisis in fact helped to mask a political crisis and prevented it from coming to a head and erupting. Challenged on a fairly minor matter, Juppé was able to dodge any serious criticism of his performance as prime minister.

To be sure, there has been much debate over Juppé's decisions — and non-decisions — more or less ever since he became prime minister. But in the past few weeks it has been held in abeyance, so to speak, because the future of the government depended solely on the unpredictable processes of the law.

Now that he has emerged the victor from the whole episode — though the case could still re-appear later on in different legal guises — Juppé can safely sidestep the questions about the general direction of his policies with which he is being bombarded by various members of his parliamentary majority, and even by members of his own party.

His potential rival, Philippe Séguin, who is president of the national assembly, made a point of stressing at the Gaullists' October 15 gathering that, since the government's "declared" determination — note the clever use of the adjective — to reduce its deficits was undisputed, its determination simultaneously to implement the reforms promised during the presidential campaign should be indisputable.

Taking a different view from Séguin, the President of the Senate, René Monory, has called on the government to stop debating reforms it cannot afford and to do everything in its power to cut back public expenditure.

Juppé is not too worried about such talk. Now that he has emerged unscathed from his judicial ordeal he can once again impose his own pace and priorities on his government. His long period as a lame-duck premier did not allow the emergence of a credible replacement.

That means he is now in a better position to establish himself in the role initially marked out for him — a helmsman for government policy in the wake of Chirac's presidential campaign, a point of reference for decision-makers and financial markets, and an umpire for his ministers. The prime minister has not had to give up an inch of the power to which he laid claim.

In all likelihood there will not now be a reshuffle, which, if it brought political heavyweights into the government, would show up Juppé as a weak leader forced to seek the collaboration of people he had passed over when he — and President Chirac — formed the government on May 23.

There will not now be any new general policy statement, which would alter, if not supersede, the statement of May 23. There will not be any concessions to champions of financial orthodoxy or reform-seekers or anyone else, for they would be seen as compromises.

Not only has Juppé not lost any of his cards, but he has actually strengthened his hand by securing the presidency of the RPR. In any other context, his election would have been seen as a formality. Coming as it did three days after his being let off the judicial hook, it looked much more as if he was cocking a snook at his detractors — always supposing that kind of thing is his style.

ON OCTOBER 16, without waiting for the end of the consultation process on social security which he had implemented earlier, Juppé announced that the fixed daily hospital charge paid by patients would go up by 27 per cent to 70 francs (£9). In so doing, he went back on his word.

He now admits that the problem of social security funding needs to be tackled earlier than he had "declared", as Séguin would have put it. But that admission also serves to reinforce his argument that without needing to re-establish his legitimacy as prime minister he is powerful enough to impose a major decision on mistrustful and sometimes hostile unions and assurance companies.

The budget debate should also give Juppé a chance to lean on those who doubt he is in control of events or, indeed, of his majority. The government is confident it will be able to turn around those deputies who, at the finance committee stage, had voted in favour of reintroducing the tax breaks on life insurance which it wanted to abolish.

In return for that victory on an issue chosen for symbolic reasons by the former prime minister Edouard Balladur's right-hand man, Nicolas Sarkozy, Juppé is prepared to negotiate over other amendments proposed by deputies exercising the "freedom" in such matters he had granted them.

If things go as expected, Juppé will be able to take the credit, when all the talking is over, for the "coherence" between the government and its parliamentary majority called for by Balladur.

That does not mean a government reshuffle is completely out of the question. But the budget debate which began last week will keep ministers busy until mid-December. This would scarcely be the best time to bring in new ministers who, when dealing with deputies, senators and the socio-economic sectors concerned, would suddenly find themselves responsible for credits allocated by their predecessors.

Here again, if Juppé has to change his team of ministers, he will be able to do so in his own good time and after having recovered, he hopes, the authority that will enable him to do so on his own terms.

How is it that Juppé seems so self-confident, when his government is getting a good deal of flak from various quarters, when some of his ministers are the subject of outright sarcasm, and when the prime minister's own style of leadership and communication has been called into question by members of the majority?

Despite the latest opinion polls, which show that the government is increasingly unpopular with the French, Juppé can point to the fact that in the end Chirac has little choice but to keep him on in the job. Like Boudu, the tramp who, in Jean Renoir's film Boudu Sauvé Des Eaux, is fished out of the Seine by an altruistic antiquarian bookseller and then outstays his welcome, the occupant of Hôtel Matignon can no longer be evicted.

What is more, he has settled comfortably into the job of RPR president that was once occupied by Chirac himself. This dénouement of Juppé's mishandling of the scandal over his flat may not turn out to be the final act, but it is nevertheless a turn-up for the books.

(October 18)

J'AI TROIS MAISONS RUE JACOB !
BONNE PIOCHE !
MONOPOLY

Juppé: 'I have three houses on the Rue Jacob!' Chirac: 'Lucky you!'

Battle cries of a Bolshoi ballerina

Russia's most famous living ballet dancer talks to **Dominique Frétard**

MAYA PLISETSKAYA is a strikingly beautiful woman, with nothing of the diva about her — when we met she was rigged out in black high-laced boots and a black blouse worn outside coarse cotton trousers. She is tiny, but not at all skinny.

In a few days, just before her 70th birthday, Plisetskaya will appear at the Palais de Chaillot in Paris in Maurice Béjart's Kurozuka, a 20-minute ballet based on a Japanese legend in which, dressed in a cape and tails, she confronts and defeats a witch, played by the star dancer Patrick Dupond.

When I went to see Plisetskaya at the Paris flat of Lily Denis, the translator of her memoirs into French (Moi, Maïa Plissetskaïa, Gallimard), she had just arrived straight from Madrid, without even bothering to drop her bags at her hotel.

One might have expected Plisetskaya's memoirs to be the confessions of a spoilt brat, a Bolshoi queen who enjoyed privileges that had very little to do with the ideology of communism. They are nothing of the sort.

Her book is the battle cry of a highly combative ballerina. She had to fight tooth and nail against the Stalinists to obtain the right to exist and get her talent recognised.

Her father, who was a consul general and director of the Spitsbergen coal mines, was a convinced Communist and a party member. But he became an "enemy of the people" overnight and was shot by the Cheka on January 7, 1938. His wife Rakhil, a former actress of the silent cinema, was deported to Siberia with her young child.

Plisetskaya was taken in by her aunt Mita, a Bolshoi ballerina. She lived in a constant state of fear: the KGB kept her under relentless surveillance and subjected her to harassment. As soon as she joined the Bolshoi Ballet she was placed on the list of those who were not allowed to go on tour. In other words, Maya Plisetskaya was to be given no chance of defecting to the West.

I expected to meet a cosmopolitan prima donna. But Plisetskaya speaks only Russian, and sits leaning forward intently as she waits for each question.

Had her memoirs been successful in Russia? "After being reprinted three times in eight months, it's now out of print. It got very good reviews. And I've been sent letters from all over the place, from the Urals to Montreal," she said, opening her arms like a compass.

What did she think of Béjart? "He has an unbelievably fertile mind. He decides on everything extremely fast, without letting things drag on. He's not a man given to doubt."

Plisetskaya is precise and professional in the way she fields questions. When I tackled the subject of her father's death and her "disgrace" in the eyes of the regime, she began to talk faster and faster, rather in the style of her book, which describes people in very blunt language.

Out poured the names of those who had persecuted her, in particular Yuri Grigorovich, the all-powerful boss of the Bolshoi, and of those — fewer in number — who opened doors for her.

Plisetskaya is someone who takes you to task in conversation, just as she does her reader. Then her voice trails off disconsolately: "To understand, you need to have lived in the Soviet Union, to have learnt to live in a society where there was no longer any such question as 'why?' "

Her grey eyes stare into space: there is more than a language barrier, there are "Stalin's 60 million dead — actually many more than that, if you ask me. Every family went through the same sort of thing we did."

When Nikita Khrushchev came to power, Plisetskaya was told her father had been shot. "We discovered that '10 years in the camp without correspondence' was a code phrase which meant the prisoner was dead and his family were about to be arrested. My father was rehabilitated in 1989."

Plisetskaya's book — which she hoped to lend a personal touch by writing it herself, after sacking two or three ghost writers — is not just one more personal account of those dark years. In it she tries to analyse what made her resist, when so many of her compatriots and her colleagues at the Bolshoi threw in the towel and let themselves be muzzled and destroyed.

So why did she stick it out in the Soviet Union? It is a question she is constantly asked, and it exasperates her. Yet her book gives the impression it was written precisely so she could work out why. When she at last got a visa for a United States tour in 1959, she felt the need to return to her native country despite its detested regime and her repeated battles with the authorities.

During the Soviet era Plisetskaya was a star ballerina who was expected to dance for heads of state from all over the world. She was showered with invitations to embassy parties, and belonged to Moscow's intellectual and artistic élite.

SHE MET French intellectuals too — the film star Gérard Philipe and the writer Louis Aragon — at the home of Lili Brik, the sister of Aragon's partner Elsa Triolet and the woman who inspired the poet Vladimir Mayakovsky.

"In the interests of the 'thaw' in East-West relations, as westerners loved to put it, the people running the Bolshoi let me dance because all the good ballerinas had left. Or almost all of them. They weren't keen on giving me parts, but they had to show we were still the best ballet company in the world." Abroad, Plisetskaya was the dancer people flocked to see.

In that risky running battle with the Soviet regime, during which she manoeuvred, raged, bluffed and sometimes won, she managed to create a personality for herself. If she had found herself in the predicament of someone like Rudolf Nureyev, who knew at the age of 20 that he would never again be allowed to dance outside the Soviet Union, she would have defected.

Another reason why Plisetskaya has kept on coming back to Moscow is the composer Rodion Shchedrin, who has been her partner since 1958.



Vitriolic rebel . . . La Plisetskaya in the sixties. Her outspoken memoirs recount a life of trial and error with the Bolshoi Ballet

"Each tour, however enjoyable, was a burden to him," Plisetskaya writes in her book. "He was harnessed to Russia and its history, customs and culture by invisible wires — but they were wires of steel. It was no easy task to tear Russia away from him. The slightest snub suffered by his country affected him very deeply. Had it not been for him, I would have surrendered long ago and been trampled in the mud."

Shchedrin and Plisetskaya finally left Russia when Mikhail Gorbachev was still in power: they were afraid there might be a military coup against perestroika that would end in imprisonment for the rest of their lives. They now live in Munich. Shchedrin obtained a five-year visa, but they have no idea what will happen when it expires.

In 1959 Plisetskaya took America by storm and people began to talk of her in the same breath as Maria Callas. Robert Kennedy, too, fell under her spell: "What was it? I still wonder today," Plisetskaya writes. "Was it flirting? No. A game? No. But there was definitely attraction, and interest, and curiosity, and novelty, and unfamiliarity — and the sense of wonderment it gave us."

The KGB were enthusiastic about this budding friendship with a possible future president of the United States. They saw Plisetskaya as a perfect bait. But she did not fall into the trap.

In 1961, she conquered audiences at the Paris Opéra with her favourite ballet, Swan Lake. She stayed at Aragon's flat in the Rue de Varenne. At the time, Aragon was absorbed with writing a history of the Soviet Union.

"One day, when I came back from the theatre, I rang the bell and banged on the door as hard as I could," Plisetskaya writes. "No one came. Then the door opened to reveal the white-haired Aragon standing there in his birthday suit. He mumbled something in French, but did not do me the honour of looking at me even once. Still mumbling, he hurried back to his study flashing his pale, slender and harmonious buttocks at me (he had beautiful legs, the legs of a dancer). I did in the end work out one word he had been mumbling: Bukharin, Bukharin."

In 1963 Plisetskaya at last appeared in London. The double accounting practised by Goskonzert (the state agency that organised tours), the fiddles of all kinds and the expensive gadgets that KGB security men brought back to top party officials have been well documented elsewhere. But Plisetskaya, whose eagle eye never missed a thing, adds plenty of juicy new detail.

When she got back to the Soviet Union, she decided to modernise the Bolshoi repertoire in an attempt to counter the company's conservatism and Grigorivich's politically correct ballets.

Alberto Alonso, a Cuban, was the first person to be invited. He choreographed a Carmen Suite for Plisetskaya — but it was censored on the grounds of obscenity. That meant more battles for the ballerina. She ended up winning the day, but not for long.

She was prevented from going on a Canadian tour with the Bolshoi, the ballet company she says she "loved to distraction". For the first time she was physically affected by the blow: she had a nervous breakdown and suffered a long period of speechlessness.

The French choreographer Roland Petit was preparing La Rose Malade for Plisetskaya, with costumes by Yves Saint Laurent. Once again she was refused a visa. Aragon then wrote to Leonid Brezhnev and the matter was sorted out. Petit was authorised to travel to Moscow and teach her the part. The premiere took place at the Palais des Sports in Paris in 1973.

Then came Plisetskaya's first encounter with Béjart. She wanted to dance Ravel's Bolero that she had seen performed at the Dubrovnik festival. She got her way. Béjart also choreographed two new ballets for her, Isadora and Leda.

Plisetskaya was then 50. She announced her intention to keep on dancing until she was 100, so she could make up for her years of restriction. From that point on, she wrote her own ballets, to music by Shchedrin and with costumes by Pierre Cardin. "I am not a choreographer, I am a performer. But if I allow myself to be guided by my imagination and the chronology of a story, I find the steps that can bring it to life."

She choreographed Anna Karenina, Lady With A Little Dog and The Seagull. "Chekhov was such a poetic genius. He succeeded in capturing his period marvellously. In my opinion, the kind of people he described were an absolute disaster. They . . ." Here, Plisetskaya's translator hesitated a moment. "They . . . shat on the revolution. With their airy-fairy manners, problems of communication and suicidal mediocrity, they allowed the really tough guys to have their own way. So I imitated their grand vacuous airs in my choreography."

SHE ADOPTED a pose, placing a hand on her forehead and putting on an exaggeratedly anguished expression. But she did not laugh. She is pained by the predicament of her country, "which is sinking deeper and deeper into anarchy".

Plisetskaya had vitriolic comments to make about all the leading figures of the Soviet Union. Khrushchev was a "blini-faced tsar who stank of vodka" and who peered at her body like a horse trader and said, pouting with disappointment, "On stage you're tall and imposing. In real life you're as skinny as a chicken."

She was equally scathing about Brezhnev and his stupidity, the KGB boss Aleksandr Shelepin, Nikolai Bulganin and Anastas Mikoyan. She denounced the fact that a class was created at the Bolshoi specially for Gorbachev's granddaughter.

She had mordant remarks, too, to make about other compatriots, such as Serge Lifar, Marc Chagall and Nadia Léger, who so loved making up stories.

"On November 28, I shall celebrate my 70th birthday by dancing Kurozuka on the stage of the Bolshoi. I still don't like what's going on in my country, but the Bolshoi is my home. Under the Soviet regime, it was constantly packed. That was where all the action was for Muscovites. They were a unique public who, by applauding the rebel I was, managed to work off their frustrations.

"The authorities were quite right when they accused me of provocation. Like a footballer — I adore football, by the way — I've always preferred to play at my home ground."

(October 13)

Le Monde

Directeur: Jean-Marie Colombani

Singapore puts the Bank to shame

Nick Cumming-Bruce in Singapore and **Alex Brummer** in London on City reaction to the Barings report

COMMENTS by the Bank of England governor, Eddie George, from Kuala Lumpur last week, to the effect that Singapore's report on Barings' collapse "is very much consistent with the Bank of England's own report", drew snorts of incredulity from Singapore's financial community.

If he or others believe that, one analyst remarked acidly, the report has failed in its mission.

But like others in Singapore, this analyst assumed that Mr George was concerned mainly with keeping up appearances. Naturally, the governor would be reluctant to echo the Singapore view — that the Price Waterhouse inspectors appointed by the Singapore government, despite obstruction from the Bank and Barings' administrators, had produced a more professional, penetrating critique of the events that brought down the Barings Group.

The Bank's investigators appear never to have approached their task with the same enthusiasm as their counterparts in Singapore. "There was a sense at that time that the Bank of England was just wheeling people in and saying 'tell us what you know about Barings'," a source close to the London investigation said. "There was a lack of faith in the process, a feeling that this wasn't going anywhere." Indeed, the speed, spirit and determination with which the Singapore regulators moved to tidy up their markets in the wake of the Barings calamity has been remarkable.

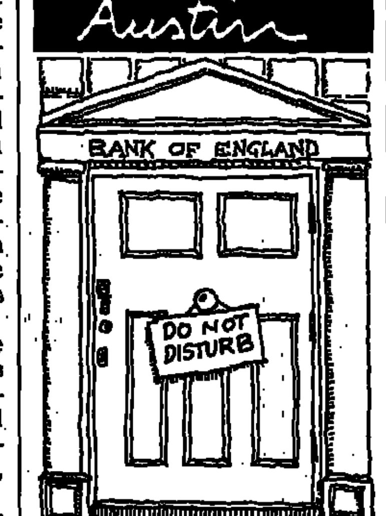
While the UK's Serious Fraud Office hesitated over whether there should be a Barings investigation at all, the Singapore financial police moved skilfully to prepare a convincing case to extradite Mr Leeson from Frankfurt. The Singapore securities authorities last week fined Barings Futures about $6.95 million for failing to follow the correct procedures. And the Price Waterhouse inspectors' report, under the Singapore Companies Act, provided a more convincing account of the events which led to Nick Leeson's losses as a financial trader.

Any outsider comparing the structure and tone of the UK's Board of Banking Supervision report and that from Singapore could not but be impressed by the contrasts between the two accounts, rather than the similarities.

In fact Britain's main markets regulator, the Securities Futures Authority, which has sweeping powers to fine transgressors in the marketplace and to remove licences to work in the City of London, has reached broadly this conclusion.

The SFA found very little in the Bank of England report to encourage it to take regulatory action against such key players as Barings' chief executive, Peter Norris, and its senior manager in Singapore, James Bax. "We didn't do anything until we saw the Bank of England report," one senior regulatory source has noted. "When we saw it we couldn't do anything either. It didn't say anything which pointed to individuals other than Leeson."

The Singapore/Price Waterhouse report is a different kettle of fish. The securities market regulators from the Securities Futures Authority have descended upon it like a pack of wolves. The allegations, accusations and sharply-drawn inferences in the report suggest that a group of Barings executives — among them Peter Norris and James Bax — failed to meet the test, set up by the SFA, of being "fit and proper" to work in the securities industry.



As a result of the Singapore report the SFA has been able to move its investigation into a far more aggressive phase. It has established a team of four enforcement officers to go through the evidence, and already has substantial interviews with Mr Norris and other London-based former Barings executives.

The one possible brake on the SFA's work is that any disciplinary steps it takes have to be strongly enough based to stand up to the prospect of a judicial review. Nevertheless, the UK securities regulators now believe there is enough red meat in the Singapore/Price Waterhouse report for them to make their civil disciplinary decisions before the end of this year. The file may also end up back in the hands of the Serious Fraud Office.

The Singapore inspectors, on whose work UK inquiries now partly depend, were confronted from the start by British establishment fear "bordering on paranoia" about where their inquiry was leading them. The British nightmare seems to have been that they had set out to clear Simex and "do a number" on the Bank.

Singapore's report, while explicitly declining to draw a firm conclusion on Barings' management motives, also gives hints of more than mere concealment. These will now be of central interest to the white-collar crime busters in the Singapore Finance Ministry's Commercial Affairs Division (CAD), which is studying possible prosecutions of top Barings managers.

The CAD appears to be wasting no time on the case. Director Lawrence Ang cut short a press conference the morning after the release of the government report to go into talks with former Barings Securities' Singapore-based regional director James Bax and Simon Jones, the finance director of BFS. The CAD has proferred no charges, but lawyers say the report's findings — that Mr Bax gave false evidence under oath and failed to meet statutory obligations of due diligence under Singapore's Companies Act — provide possible grounds for prosecution. "If the directors wilfully shut their eyes, that act is culpable in itself," a senior Singapore lawyer noted. "They could bring him to court now."

Legal action against Mr Norris and other UK-based former Barings managers will be more difficult. Although Mr Norris was a director of BFS and therefore as liable for breaches of fiduciary duty as Mr Bax, lawyers say Companies Act offences are not on the schedule of extraditable offences between Britain and Singapore. The CAD will accordingly need more elusive evidence linking UK-based staff to Penal Code offences. This is where Mr Leeson's role as a potential state witness becomes an object of particular interest.

"Nick is vital to the CAD," one lawyer suggests. "They are waiting for a link, and Leeson is the link. If he gives evidence against them then those guys in London are in trouble." But Singapore must wrap up the prosecution of Mr Leeson before they can enlist his services as state witness.

The CAD is understood to have had general discussions on Mr Leeson's case, including possible plea bargaining, with his Singapore lawyer John Koh, himself a former CAD deputy director. But no detailed discussion is likely until Mr Leeson decides whether to push ahead with his appeal against extradition from Germany, due for submission early next month.

● The Institute of Chartered Accountants last week asked its investigators to decide if there are grounds for disciplinary action against any members or member firms concerning the Barings affair.

Changi awaits arrival of Nick Leeson

Nick Cumming-Bruce

IF AND when he returns to Singapore, Nick Leeson will take a very different route to the one he knows so well.

Peeling off the highway into the city, lined with trees and flowers he will within minutes find himself behind the forbidding grey concrete walls of a maximum security prison.

When he arrives at Changi, Mr Leeson might just have time to snatch a glance at the white guard-towers on the corner, with rifle-toting Gurkha sentries and searchlights silhouetted against the sky, before his transport swings under the turreted main gate of a legend of the colonial era and Japanese occupation.

Mr Leeson will not be crushing centipedes for his dinner in some Papillon-style tropical hell-hole, but local lawyers agree that the conditions for Changi's 1,700 prisoners may still come as something of a shock to a westerner.

Behind Changi's daunting 7-metre grey concrete walls, little remains of the blocks built under British rule and turned into a "King Rat" concentration camp for allied prisoners by the Japanese.

But the cells for a maximum security prisoner like Mr Leeson allow none of even the most basic home comforts he would have expected in a British jail.

Lawyers say he will share a cell of perhaps 7 sq metres with four to six other prisoners, and will sleep on a mat on the floor. Nor do prisoners have access to any television or radio in their cells, just to books and perhaps a newspaper. If there is any consolation it is that Singapore's jails are largely free of harassment among prisoners.

On remand, Mr Leeson would get out of his cell for two hours every afternoon and be eligible to receive a visitor every weekday. But on conviction, the visits drop to one a fortnight and the only diversion is the eight hours or so a day prisoners are put to work.

Mr Leeson may find himself suffering the drudgery of long hours in a bakery or laundry, or mastering the arts of printing and furniture-making.

It would also be remarkable if he did not become a devout churchgoer. Among the few weekend diversions, it seems, is an hour's service for Christians.

In Brief

MERGER fever continues to grip America's banks as BankAmerica and NationsBank, two of the largest in the country, are rumoured to be negotiating. Together they would create the largest bank in the US, with combined assets of $423 billion and branches stretching from coast to coast.

TOSHIHIDE Iguchi, the man at the centre of the Daiwa Bank scandal, has pleaded guilty in to conspiracy charges relating to a $1.1 billion loss from unauthorised trading.

INTEL, the world's largest chip manufacturer, is to spend more than $3 billion on building new semi-conductor plants in Ireland and Israel.

RUSSIA'S exploration company, Lukoil, has been given additional rights in the development of the Azerbaijan oilfields in a diplomatic move to encourage Moscow to agree to politically sensitive $8 billion offshore production plans by a consortium of the world's biggest oil companies led by British Petroleum.

THE POUND plunged to its lowest level against the mark for five months after political jitters across Europe accelerated the headlong flight into the German currency.

BRITISH Airways is to demand millions in compensation from Boeing for late delivery on a $3.5 billion order for new 777 airliners.

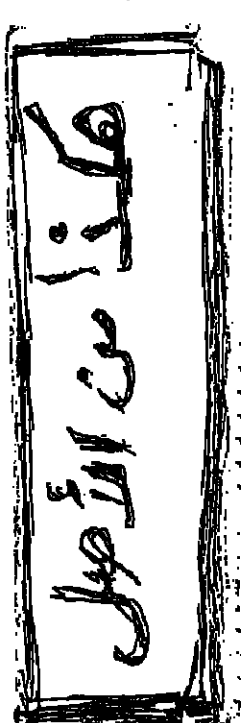
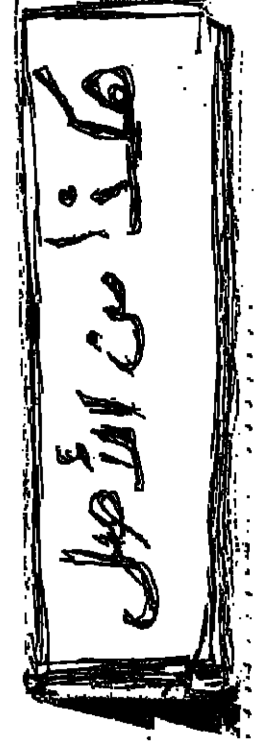
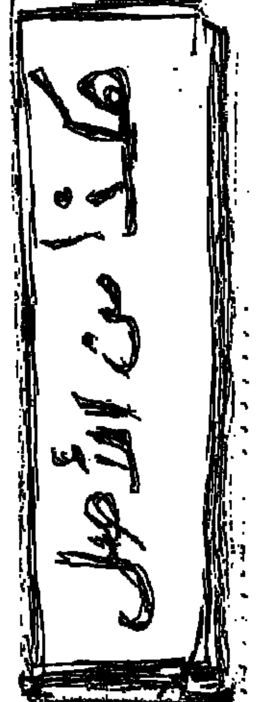
THE chairman of British Airways, Sir Colin Marshall, is set to become the next president of the CBI. He is expected to succeed the current president in May 1996.

LLOYD'S of London is putting pressure on the five main clearing banks to contribute to its proposed £3 billion compensation package for loss-making Names by dealing leniently with Names who are having difficulties with their bank guarantees.

FOREIGN EXCHANGES

	Sterling rates October 16	Sterling rates October 23
Australia	2.0803-2.0844	2.0938-2.0980
Austria	15.72-15.74	15.35-15.38
Belgium	45.96-46.07	44.89-44.99
Canada	2.1048-2.1078	2.1641-2.1672
Denmark	8.66-8.68	8.48-8.51
France	7.80-7.81	7.70-7.71
Germany	2.2362-2.2393	2.1824-2.1855
Hong Kong	12.17-12.18	12.17-12.18
Ireland	0.9774-0.9800	0.9748-0.9773
Italy	2,522-2,526	2,548-2,552
Japan	158.10-158.37	157.26-157.53
Netherlands	2.5004-2.5037	2.4436-2.4468
New Zealand	2.3843-2.3884	2.3850-2.3883
Norway	9.84-9.85	9.69-9.70
Portugal	234.97-235.60	231.19-231.62
Spain	192.89-193.18	189.96-190.25
Sweden	10.95-10.97	10.53-10.55
Switzerland	1.8107-1.8135	1.7732-1.7760
USA	1.5748-1.5758	1.5790-1.5800
ECU	1.2146-1.2160	1.1997-1.2014

FTSE 100 share index down [illegible], FTSE 250 index down [illegible], Gold down [illegible].

Games universities play

A needle match is shaping up among higher education institutions up and down Britain. **Donald MacLeod** reports on head-hunting in the academic transfer league — the only game in town

THERE are 100 vice-chancellors out there playing fantasy football, as a senior academic remarked amid the growing stampede to sign up academic stars for next year's big match.

Vice-chancellors gathered in Belfast last month for their annual "retreat", the frenzied competition that has led to a multi-million pound transfer market in professors showed no signs of calming down. Every university is jostling for position in the run-up to the crucial 1996 Research Assessment Exercise.

University managers talk of a "vicious" transfer market. "There's a football market in new staff and folk know their value to the nearest pound," said a Glasgow professor.

The scores handed down by the funding councils' panels of experts in 1996 will determine not only each department's ranking in the academic pecking order for its subject but also fix their funding for four years to come. A lot of jobs and careers depend on getting a result. A department rated 5 gets four times as much research funding as one rated 2, while a 1 brings nothing.

But now a late change in the rules is causing consternation in some quarters and a dawning realisation that departments which have spent aggressively to boost ratings may come unstuck, to the barely disguised delight of their rivals.

The four-yearly Research Assessment Exercise, while virtually unheard of outside the universities, is discussed in labs and common-rooms by the dons from Aberdeen southwards as obsessively as any World Cup. Tactics are worked out; dummy runs are made; considerable anguish and bitterness is expended over team selection.

A glimpse of the frenetic transfer market can be seen in a Guardian survey of professors' jobs advertised in the quality press. In the six months between April and August this year the number of advertisements was 68 per cent higher than the same period last year. Over the year to August the increase was 45 per cent, suggesting the pace has been hotting up as the deadline approaches.

All staff in post by March 31 count towards the research rating and — this is what fuels the market — so do their publications over the past four years (six years in the case of humanities). Hence what is known in the trade as "buying CVs".

So University College London has signed Martin Gilbert, biographer of Churchill (and apparently John Major) and historian of the Holocaust, as a professor in the Department of Hebrew and Jewish Studies, which badly wants to improve on its existing grade 3. His appointment is for a year.

On a grander scale Glasgow University, smarting from several mediocre ratings in 1992, began the year by advertising for 60 new staff. Thirteen departments have been merged in a new Institute of Biomedical and Life Sciences, although as its director Professor Charles Fewson points out, it will not really make an impact until the 2000 exercise.

Warwick, where research income had slipped, launched a £10 million fellowship scheme to appoint 36 young scholars — a strategy initiated by competitors Manchester and Leeds, as well as new universities such as De Montfort and Coventry which are seeking promotion to higher research leagues.

Frenzied competition has led to a multi-million pound transfer market in professors

In a confidential memo to staff at Royal Holloway and Bedford New College, London, the principal, Norman Gower, stressed the need to recruit quickly to maximise departments' research position. "The main criteria we have used is where an appointment will produce a definite return. Most of the appointments we are looking at will be short term, two- or three-year posts, which give flexibility to both the college and departments."

A mini-boom in professors of education is under way; Cardiff has appointed six new professors to its modest-sized department, Bristol is content with a mere three. Warwick has taken Leeds's Robin Alexander — one of the famous "Three Wise Men" whose report on primary classrooms provoked a storm — while one of Edinburgh's bright young stars, Lindsay Paterson, has been poached by Moray House Institute of Education, which wants to demonstrate it is now more than just a teacher-training college. No academic worth his or her salt wants to be on the sidelines but a good many of them question whether the game has got out of hand and is distorting the research it is supposed to improve.

In the rush to get a good grade in 1996, are universities neglecting long-term research in favour of pumping out publications before the March 31 deadline? More important, are vice-chancellors chasing the established names, cheque-books in hand, rather than nurturing talented young researchers who have yet to publish their work?

Without resorting to the Jean-Marc Bosman type of legal action to halt the transfer "musical chairs", the funding councils in England, Wales and Scotland have acted to damp it down by changing the rules in a small but significant way. The 69 subject panels have been instructed to weigh up each department's future as well as its past glories; however distinguished the new stars and their CVs, a department must demonstrate it has young talent and coherent plans for the next four years.

Brian Fender, the new chief executive of the Higher Education Funding Council for England, said: "The panels have a responsibility to look at whether they expect that record to be sustained." Professor Fender, who used to run a European research institute, believes the exercise is having a good effect, making universities think strategically and form stronger research groups.

Professor Fender rejects the idea that British research is in decline, arguing that investment from industry, charities and sources like the European Union is growing. "The productivity and effectiveness of research has increased. The research assessment exercise has helped that. It has focused people's minds on the outcomes of research."

At Glasgow, Professor Fewson admitted their disappointing number of 3s in life sciences had done exactly that. The new institute would be aiming for international excellence. "It's a bit like Scottish football," he said wryly. "When you get out into the cold wide world you realise you're not as good as you've been telling everyone."

At the end of October academics will find out exactly how the panels are going to assess them. That will spark off a new flurry of tactical manoeuvring and fine tuning before the anxious wait for the results.

One thing in academic life, however, is as certain as death and taxes; the funding councils have already commissioned research on the Research Assessment Exercise.

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MSc in Development Policy and Planning
MSc in Social Development Planning and Management
MSc in Health Planning and Development

Postgraduate Diplomas - 9 months
Diploma in Development Policy and Planning
Diploma in Social Development Planning and Management
Diploma in Health Planning and Development

The Centre also offers a 10-week specialised courses and individual study programmes.

For further details please write to:
The Admissions Secretary
Centre for Development Studies
University of Wales Swansea
Singleton Park, Swansea SA2 8PP
Wales, United Kingdom.
Tel: 01792 295332
Fax: 01792 295682



University of Wales, Cardiff
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12 month full-time course
Beginning September 1996

Applications welcome from students who hold or expect to obtain a good honours degree in Psychology, Philosophy, Social Science, Linguistics, Computer Science or related subjects.

For information and application forms please write to Dr S J Payne, School of Psychology, University of Wales, Cardiff.
email: paynes@cf.ac.uk.

NANYANG TECHNOLOGICAL UNIVERSITY
Nanyang Business School

The Nanyang Business School offers both undergraduate and postgraduate degrees in Accountancy and Business. It has highly trained faculty with extensive business and professional experience. Many of the School's faculty members obtained their Ph.D degrees from internationally renowned universities in the U.S., Canada, U.K. and Australia, and have published widely in local and international journals.

MBA

The MBA Programme is characterised by a unique blend of rigorous general management and specialised functional training. It is designed to prepare and equip graduates with general training in business and management and specialised training in:

- MBA (ACCOUNTANCY)
- MBA (BANKING & FINANCE)
- MBA (BUSINESS LAW)
- MBA (HOSPITALITY & TOURISM MANAGEMENT)
- MBA (INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS)
- MBA (MANAGEMENT OF INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY)
- MBA (MANAGEMENT OF TECHNOLOGY)

DURATION OF PROGRAMME

Full-time and part-time courses are available. The minimum periods of candidature for full-time and part-time courses are 4 trimesters and 6 trimesters (of 14 weeks each) respectively. There are 3 trimesters for each academic year of 12 months.

ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS

The minimum requirements are:

- A good bachelor's degree
- At least two years' management or professional experience at time of admission
- An acceptable score in the Graduate Management Admission Test (GMAT), taken not earlier than three years before the date of admission.
- An acceptable score in the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) for applicants whose medium of instruction at tertiary level was not English.

For further information, please contact:
Mrs Tan-Lee Loo Hiang
Nanyang Business School
Nanyang Technological University
Nanyang Avenue, S'pore 639798
Tel: (65) 791 1744 ext 4722/5730
Fax: (65) 7913561

Ph.D (BUSINESS)

The Ph.D. programme aims at producing graduates with the research skills necessary to develop their potential as leaders in their fields and community via structured coursework as well as research and teaching apprenticeship. The coursework component of the programme introduces doctoral students to theory and practice in their area of specialisation and related areas. Students then work on their doctoral dissertation, which is conducted under the supervision of faculty members and external examiners. Candidates for the Ph.D. programme, on completion of the required coursework, will also be awarded the degree of Master of Science (Business).

PERIOD OF CANDIDATURE

The minimum period of candidature including the dissertation is 24 months for full-time students and 36 months for part-time students. The maximum period is 60 months for full-time students and 72 months for part-time students.

FUNDING

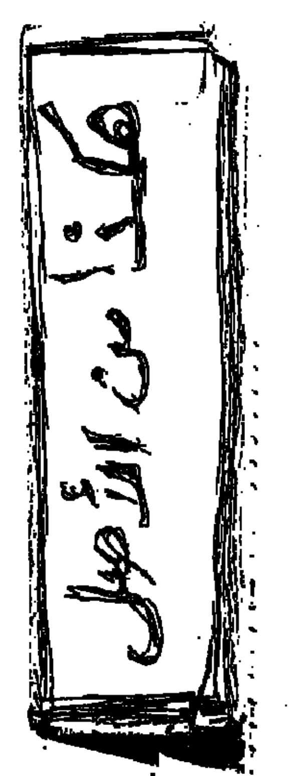
Funding is available in the form of teaching and research assistantships. A limited number of scholarships are also available for outstanding students.

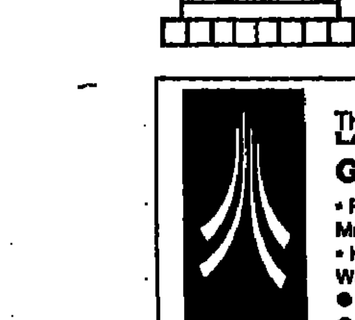
ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS

The minimum requirements are:
A good undergraduate honours or a good Masters or MBA degree.
Demonstration of research capability.
An acceptable score in the Graduate Management Admission Test (GMAT), taken not earlier than three years before the date of admission.

For further information, please contact:

Assoc Prof Pang Yang Hoong
Director, Ph.D. Programme
Nanyang Business School
Nanyang Technological University
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Tel: (65) 7911744 ext 4754
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For further details and course literature contact:
Mrs Susan Lucas (ref: GW)
The Management School
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Fax: (+44 116) 252 3755.

Diploma: CLMS, 103 Princess Road East, Leicester University LE1 7LA. UK
Tel: (+44 116) 252 5903.
Fax: (+44 116) 252 5902.

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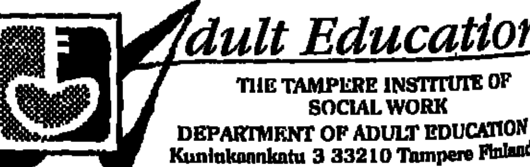
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Fax: +44 (0)1803 201831

*(Knightsbridge University does not offer U.K. authorized degrees)

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- *Teaching English as a Foreign Language*
- *Educational Management,*
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- *Science Education*
- *Curriculum and Assessment*
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Applications are invited from students who wish to pursue research in education leading to an MPhil or PhD.
The School has a broad range of research interests, including Educational Management and Administration, Curriculum and Assessment, Learning, Psychology, Primary Health Care, TEFL, Literacy, Education and Development, Teacher Education, Early Childhood, Education in small States, Comparative Studies and other fields of interest to potential students can be discussed.
The School offers an excellent programme of training courses in research methods, has its own Research Support Unit and is recognised by the ESRC for both full-time and part-part studentships.

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The Bristol course was the first Doctoral programme in Education in Britain. It is now in its fourth year and has had its first cohort of graduates.
Participants include senior professionals from HE, FE, nurse education, psychological services, schools and LEAs, and come from the UK and overseas.
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There are two strands: Management and Administration of Education and Psychology in Education. Additional units in Teacher Education are available within both strands.

For more information: Registration Office, School of Education, 35 Berkeley Square, Bristol BS8 1JA. UK. Telephone 0117 9287048. Fax 0117 9251537

UNIVERSITY OF WALES SWANSEA
CHAIR OF NURSING

The University of Wales Swansea is seeking to make an appointment to a Chair of Nursing commencing January 1 1996 or as soon after this date as is possible.

The Department of Nursing, Midwifery and Health Care (formerly the Mid and West Wales College of Nursing and Midwifery) was established on January 1 1992. A range of educational programmes from pre registration nursing to doctoral studies is offered. The department has an innovative research strategy and a developing research culture. It has good international links and is committed to excellence in teaching and practice.

Applications are invited from candidates with a distinguished record in nursing research and in nursing practice or education. A PhD and a record of substantial post doctoral research is essential.

The person appointed will be expected to work with a team under the direction of the Head of Department, to promote the department, provide academic leadership, contribute to the implementation of the departmental research strategy through grand acquisitions, publications and supervision of post graduate students and to contribute to teaching and staff development.

The salary will be in accordance with normal university practice.

Potential candidates wishing to discuss the post informally should contact Mrs Barbara Green, Head of Department on (01792) 295790. Further particulars can be obtained from the Personnel Office, University of Wales Swansea, Singleton Park, Swansea. SA2 8PP, to which office applications (10 copies) should be returned by Friday December 1 1995.

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Centre for Language and Communication at Cardiff

MA/Diploma in Language and Communication Research

This degree is aimed at people wishing to develop research skills in various areas of language and communication in order to pursue academic research (for example, a PhD), or to promote their professional career in such areas of work. Our areas of research and teaching specialisms include sociolinguistics, discourse studies, language attitudes, intercultural communication, mass communications and the media. The Diploma can be taken as part of a PhD or MPhil.

MA/Diploma in Applied Linguistics

This course is designed for those with a professional interest in language, particularly those seeking a career in Language Education, first, second and foreign language teaching.

Applicants for both schemes should have a university degree or equivalent qualification or experience.

The Centre for Language and Communication research has been awarded the highest rating in both research (5) and teaching (Excellent) in the most recent UK universities research and teaching quality assessments.

Applications to Mrs Julia Bullough
MA Admissions, Centre for Language and Communication Research, School of English Studies, Communication and Philosophy
university of Wales, Cardiff, PO Box 94
Cardiff CF1 3XB
Tel: (01222) 874243, Fax: (01222) 874242

UNIVERSITY OF SALFORD

DEPARTMENT OF POLITICS AND CONTEMPORARY HISTORY

SENIOR LECTURER OR LECTURER A/B IN EUROPEAN POLITICS

The Department seeks applications from research-active area specialists in the field of European Politics, to include the ability to teach one or more of the following: Politics and Policy-Making of the European Union; German Politics; Eastern Europe; Gender and Politics; Race in Contemporary Europe; European Security. The ability to teach the Philosophy of the Social Sciences would be advantageous. The appointee will join the European Studies Research Institute, to which all members of the Department belong.

Informal enquiries to: Professor Martin Alexander on 0161-745-5166.

Application forms and further particulars available from Personnel Office, University of Salford, Salford M5 4WT (0161-745-5201 : 24 hour answering service). Completed applications should be returned to this Office by 10 November 1995, quoting reference PCH/22. Interviews will be held on the afternoon of Monday 27 November and morning of Tuesday 28 November 1995.

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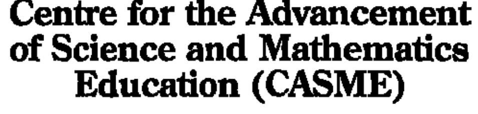


ASSOCIATION OF COMMONWEALTH UNIVERSITIES

For further details of any of the following staff vacancies please contact the Appointments Department, ACU, 36 Gordon Square, London WC1H 0PF, UK (internat. tel. +44 171 813 3024 [24 hour answerphone]; fax +44 171 813 3055; e-mail: appts.acu@ucl.ac.uk), quoting reference number of post(s). Details will be sent by airmail/first class post. A sample copy of the publication *Appointments in Commonwealth Universities*, including subscription details, is available from the same source.

University	Post	Ref. No.
AFRICA AND THE CARIBBEAN		
Botswana	P Sociology	W44416
Botswana	L Sociology (Theory & Research Methods)	W44417
Botswana	L Sociology (Crime & Deviance)	W44418
Botswana	L Home Economics Education	W44419
Botswana	SAL (Technical Services/Cataloguing)	W44420
Botswana	SAL (Faculty of Engineering & Technology)	W44421
Botswana	Subject Librarian	W44422
Botswana	L Archives & Records Management	W44427
West Indies (Jamaica)	L/AL Geology	W44424
West Indies (Jamaica)	L Social Research Methodology	W44425
West Indies (Trinidad)	SL/L & L/AL Pharmacy	W44405
West Indies (Trinidad)	Deputy Bursar	W44423
AUSTRALIA		
Griffith (Queensland)	P International Finance	W44411
Griffith (Queensland)	AP Marketing	W44412
Queensland	L Music (Violin)	W44429
Sydney	PRF School of Physiotherapy	W44406
HONG KONG		
Hong Kong UST	Faculty Recruitment 1996 (range of disciplines)	W44402
Univ. Hong Kong	SL/L Professional Legal Education	W44426
Univ. Hong Kong	Deputy Vice-Chancellor	W44428
NEW ZEALAND		
Auckland	L French	W44403
Auckland	L Political Studies (Policy Studies)	W44404
Auckland	L Engineering Communication	W44407
Auckland	SL Clinical Genetics	W44408
Canterbury	Chair in Speech and Language Therapy	W44409
PACIFIC		
South Pacific (Fiji)	SL/L Management	W44410

Abbreviations: P - Professor; AP - Associate Professor; SL - Senior Lecturer; L - Lecturer; AL - Assistant Lecturer; SAL - Senior Assistant Librarian; PRF - Principal Research Fellow.



Director

Centre for the Advancement of Science and Mathematics Education (CASME)





Established in 1985 and operating from the campus of the University of Natal, CASME is an independent NGO and a fully autonomous trust, it is committed to the professional development of mathematics and science educators serving the Secondary School sector, as well as developing their leadership skills. Funded by a number of leading South African organisation, institutions and international aid agencies, CASME is a dynamic and expanding organisation with formal and non-formal development programmes in KwaZulu-Natal, Mpumalango, Eastern Cape and the Free State.

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- Leading a team of professional educationists
- Promoting various forms of In-service Education
- Developing formal relationships with education authorities
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- and institutions involved in Science and Maths education
- The ongoing evaluation of activities and programmes
- Financial management, budgets and fund raising

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APPOINTMENT EFFECTIVE: January/February 1996

Qualified and interested persons are invited to forward a curriculum vitae which should also list the names and postal addresses of three contactable referees, to the Vacancies Officer, University of Natal, Private Bag X10, Dalbridge, 4014. Fax. (0131) 2602139

Telephone (0131) 2601446 quoting the reference D176/95

CLOSING DATE: 15 November 1995

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KENT
UNIVERSITY OF KENT AT CANTERBURY

MA in Social Work Studies

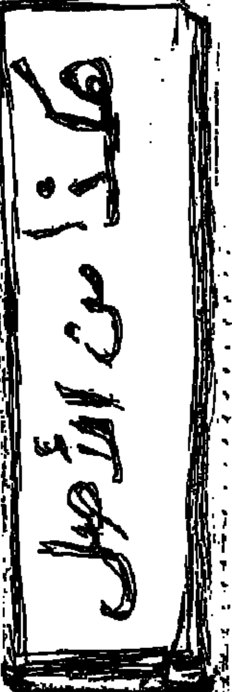
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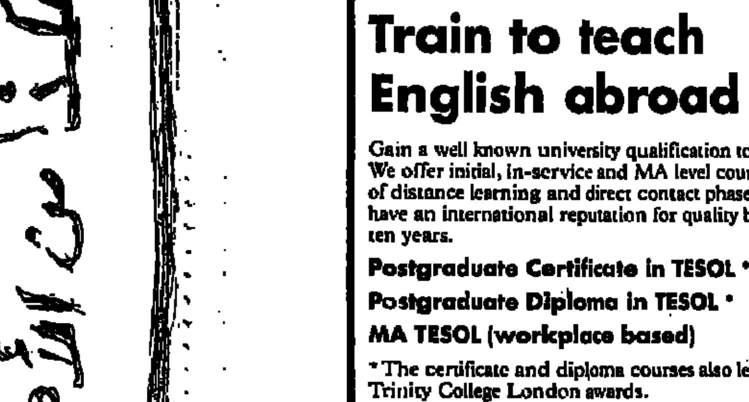
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DEPARTMENT OF GEOLOGY

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Each student will complete the course by undertaking an engineering geology related dissertation as well as attending an overseas study tour, currently to Scandinavia.

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Course leader: Mr Bill Murphy

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Applications are invited from graduates, those about to graduate and those with equivalent qualifications or industrial experience to:

The Administrative Assistant,
Department of Geology,
The University of Portsmouth,
Burnaby Building, Burnaby Road,
Portsmouth. PO1 3QL.
Tel 01705 842259
Fax 01705 842244
email gilesd@geol.port.ac.uk



UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD

Khalid Bin Abdullah Al Saud Professorship for the Study of the Contemporary Arab World

The electors intend to proceed to an election to the Khalid Bin Abdullah Al Saud Professorship for the Study of the Contemporary Arab World which falls vacant with effect from 1 October 1995 upon the resignation of the first holder, Professor M.D.C. Gilsenan.

In accordance with the wishes of the benefactor, anyone whose scholarly interest lie in the modern Arab world is invited to apply. The University intends to appoint a person with an international research reputation who will provide intellectual and academic leadership in the chosen area of study. A thorough working knowledge of Arabic is regarded as an essential requirement for the holder of the post.

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Applications (ten copies, or one only from overseas candidates), naming three referees should be received not later than 13 November 1995 by the Registrar, University Offices, Wellington Square, Oxford OX1 2JD, U.K. from whom further particulars may be obtained.

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University of Luton

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University of Luton, Park Square,
Luton, Beds LU1 3JU
Telephone 01582 743395

A review of the applications received will shortly begin and will continue until the post is filled.

committed to excellence in education and research

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'Our aims are to improve access to education, create equality of opportunity, meet community needs'

Applicants are invited to apply for the following posts:

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Ref: AD95/28

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Bilston Community College is an equal opportunities employer and positively welcomes applications from all sections of the community irrespective of sex, ethnic or racial origin, colour, disability, sexual orientation, or responsibility for dependants.

CLOSING DATE: 7 November 1995

Application forms and further details from:

Personnel Office
Bilston Community College
Devonshire House
Ettingshall Road
Wolverhampton
West Midlands WV2 2JT
Tel: (01902) 821880/821500
Fax: (01902) 821103

Bilston COMMUNITY COLLEGE

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The successful candidate will have experience at a senior level in an arts organisation, a funding body, a local authority or a voluntary sector agency; excellent communication skills; and good analytical, evaluative, project management and negotiating skills.

For further information write to West Midlands Arts, 82 Granville Street, Birmingham B1 2LH to obtain an application pack or contact Michael Elliott, Chief Executive, on 0121 631 3121 to discuss your interest in the post. The closing date for the receipt of applications is Friday 3 November.

West Midlands Arts is an Equal Opportunities Employer and particularly welcomes applications from individuals of Afro-Caribbean or Asian descent and from people with disabilities



Action on Disability and Development

CHIEF EXECUTIVE

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So where were you, sisters?

Jonathan Freedland asks the million dollar question: are black women celebrating last week's Million Man March in Washington?

THEY BAKED cakes, looked after the kids and stayed at home. Some lined the route, cheering their men on like wives sending soldiers off to war. And only a few grumbled about letting the men take charge.

For one day, America's black women were happy to step back in time, as they sat and watched the Million Man March — the landmark event from which they were so pointedly excluded. Most shared the sentiment of the banners held up by a handful of women sprinkled among the 800,000-plus crowd of black men: We're With You, Brothers.

But as the impact of the demonstration — easily the largest show of black unity since Martin Luther King declared "I have a dream" in 1963 — begins to filter throughout black America, a split is opening up among the community's women. Some sisters are having second thoughts.

At the heart of the debate is a painful conflict between race and sex. As blacks, they mourn the desperate state of their communities; but as women, they stand to lose in the struggle to make things better. Underlying it all is the awkward fact that America's black women are often in-between people: living a better life than black men, but denied the chances of a white woman.

First to break ranks has been Angela Davis, the former 1970s activist who made the afro *the* radical chic hair-do. She said the Million Man March represented "retrograde politics", out-datedly casting men as the saviours of families and communities. The fact that march organiser Louis Farrakhan had asked women to stay indoors and tend to the children did not help.

"Justice cannot be served by countering a distorted racist view of black manhood with a narrowly sexist vision of men standing 'a degree above women'," Davis steamed.

Now a lecturer in philosophy, Davis is part of a group that dislikes Farrakhan not only because of his anti-white racism and anti-Semitism, but also because of the way his Nation of Islam sect treats women. Dressed in traditional, "modest" Muslim garb, the women are prescribed a secondary, if not mute role in the ultra-conservative movement — walking several steps behind the bow-tied men who run things.

Black author Paula Giddings accused Farrakhan of promoting "19th century solutions to 21st century problems" and such opposition is not insignificant. Much of black America is now led by women, including the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, the nation's oldest civil rights organisation. Chair Myrlie Evers-Williams ordered a boycott of the march, because of the men-only policy.

For others, however, the demands of racial solidarity outweighed the scruples of feminism. Many whites were shocked earlier this month to see black women cheering along with their men at the acquittal of O J Simpson. Even though Simpson was, at the very least, a wife-beater, black American women found their hatred of racist police mattered more.

So it was again at the march, just two weeks after the verdict. The problems of the black inner city were, said several women at the rally, simply too great for women to start standing on feminist principle.

FOR THESE women, the logic was simple. The pathologies afflicting black America — crime, drugs, violence, domestic abuse, illegitimacy — are pathologies of the black male. Men needed a march because men have the problem.

That's why Rosa Parks, the "mother of the civil rights movement" — and the woman who famously refused to sit at the back of the bus — addressed the crowd. She knows about the crisis of the black American male: last year she was mugged and beaten by one.

And that's why poet Maya Angelou delivered a new work: "The night has been long, the wound has been deep," she told the throng of black, male faces. "The pit has been dark, the walls have been steep." Finally she appealed to the men below, men who have allowed 68 per cent of black babies to grow up in fatherless families: "Save your race."

One in a million: Maya Angelou addresses the marchers AP

Angelou and others ignored the macho bravado and applauded the march's message, a resolve by black men to face up to their responsibilities. Several women cried as they saw — on live television — more than half a million men swear an oath to be a better man. "I pledge from this day forward, I will never abuse my wife by striking her, disrespecting her, for she is the mother of my children and the producer of my future," they said, following Minister Farrakhan's lead. "I will never agin use the B-word to describe any female, particularly my own black sister."

Black women drew comfort from these promises, even as they wondered whether anything would really change.

Bridgette Henley, a Washington probation officer with first-hand experience of the plight of African-American men, worried that the marchers who seemed so peaceful and generous would soon "go back to their old way of behaving". But she also said she understood why men needed a show of strength to heal their broken self-esteem. They had once been breadwinners, with jobs in steel mills and factories. Now the plants had closed, leaving service industry jobs behind — jobs in which women often had the advantage. "Black women got on in school and got an education, while black men turned to alcohol and drugs," Henley says. "They just self-destructed."

The sexes even experience racism differently. "A white man will hire a black female before a black male — black women are not a threat," she says. "So black women generally have more money than black men. Women now don't have to come to a man: they can buy a car or a house or have children on their own." Ms Henley has done all three and the statistics bear her out: black women outnumber black men in college by three to two, are more likely to have a job and even live longer lives.

The first Million Woman March is probably a long way off.

CLASSIFIED

Bet gives last orders

Nancy Banks-Smith watches as TV's leading landlady pulls her last pint



Bet Lynch, alias Julie Goodyear, in her last episode of Coronation Street after 25 years at the Rovers Return

BET snapped in her last episode with the exhilarating twang of knicker elastic.

The story of Coronation Street so far. After working in The Rovers Return for 25 years, Bet the landlady needed £66,000 to buy the pub.

An exciting way to find out who your friends are is to ask them to lend you £66,000. Bet was turned down like a bedspread by her best friend Rita, whose only visible expenditure is on sequined angora sweaters, and by her stepdaughter Vicky who, as Bet said bitterly, knows when summat's knackered. She sold her 'orse, didn't she?

Now read on. The effect was memorable. Bet's hair boiled over as she ordered everybody out of the pub ("There's not one of you lot I haven't wanted to get rid of in my time!") and threw the Mayoress of Weatherfield out after them ("Out she goes. Out, out, out!").

It reminded me of The Bowmans, one of Hancock's finest half hours, in which he nonchalantly got shot of the entire cast of an everyday soap of country folk. "Oh dear, what a shame. They've all fallen down that disused mine shaft."

You could hear an aitch drop in the Rovers. Silence like a poultice came to heal the blows of sound. Absently, Bet emptied an ash tray, which was odd because no one smokes in the Rovers.

At this spooky moment Alderman Alf Roberts, a grocer, (his name, position and profession identical with Mrs Thatcher's father) emerged from a leisurely visit to the gents and found himself the last man left alive. "What time is it?" he asked wildly. "Half past one." "Night or day?"

The moral is don't stay too long in the gents. Or in a soap. You may get a shock when you come out.

Bet left Coronation Street in a cab, giving no forwarding address. "A quid says it's a Greek island. Single women they always go where there's sunshine," said the cabbie. "And do they find it?" asked Bet, answering herself: "Oh, they do you know. They all find it sooner or later."

An advertisement for beds, timed to coincide with these traumatic events, was less encouraging. "'Ey Bet," it said. (Surely 'Ee Bet? Ed) "Now you can look forward to an uninterrupted night's sleep." I don't think that an uninterrupted night's sleep was ever Bet's idea of a good time.

Meanwhile, back in Coronation Street, a shop assistant is accusing the manager of sexual harassment. Reg, adjusting his wig nervously, asked sharply: "You've not been reading the Guardian, 'ave yer?" She denied it with spirit. So that's all right then.

A Country Diary

Zoe Miller

TANZANIA: A fall from power is rarely painless. As the first Tanzanian multi-party elections take place, it's intriguing to watch how the chimpanzees of the Mahale mountains make the transition.

Ntologi, an alpha-male of over 15 years' tenure, has been ousted. In a final great fight between this remarkable 40-year-old ape and the muscle-bound younger male, Nsaba, the old alpha, wounded, flees the sanctuary of the group. He is seen wandering, solitary, on the periphery. Nsaba assumes the leadership as the other chimpanzees indicate their submission.

But in the forest, too, the democratic process is imperfect. Though Nsaba has a strong power base in coalition with three other adult males (Kalunde, Aji, Jilba), his hold on the dominant position may be brief. His consorts are known to be duplicitous and Toshibo, a male two years his junior, is a reluctant courtier, challenging him frequently. These acts of aggression become more pertinent when we discover Toshibo and the ex-alpha male alone together, grooming. They have, it seems, formed a covert alliance: with Ntologi's brain and Toshibo's brawn it is likely to be a powerful one.

Toshibo continues to fight Nsaba and a few days later, Ntologi reappears in the midst. The violence suddenly escalates: every male does battle, in a panicky reshuffle. Females are beaten up too, particularly by the lower status males who dare not vent their aggression on their superiors. Infants who have long since travelled independently take to their mothers' backs once again.

The instability persists. All the adult males now bear the scars of war. Aji limps, a front hand out of action, the tendon possibly severed. Man should draw inspiration, however, from the processes of reconciliation in the forest. Having inflicted a severe seven-inch wound on Jilba's back, Nsaba is found a day later, licking and cleaning it for him. No adult males have been killed, nor are they likely to be. Diurnal activities continue.

The chimpanzees co-operate almost daily on red colobus monkey hunts. Wild nutmeg trees are shared by each member of the group as they chew the bright red "mace". Wakilufia, an old female whose two-week-old baby has just died, seeks consolation from Nsaba and Kalunde, who groom her. She still carries the dried-up corpse with her two weeks later; she lifts it to her face, puts it to her nipple and slings it over her shoulders as the group moves on.

One young female causes a great stir amongst human observers, when she picks up a tracker's machete from the path. She climbs a tree, builds a day-nest and lies back, swinging the machete by its handle, clipping off overhanging branches with its razor-sharp edge.

Miya, a somewhat afflicted female, is transfixed by a particular human — she freezes mid-stride, mouth pursed with fear. We suddenly realise she is frightened by the visitor's fake leopard-skin skirt, which produces a far more profound terror than a fight between two chimps in her group ever would.

The apes may not be our gentlest cousins, but the distinction they make between rival and enemy is great. Perhaps we humans could benefit by doing more of the same.

Notes & Queries Joseph Harker

IN THE early fifties I am convinced we were taught that Mount Godwin-Austen was the second highest mountain in the world. When did K2 appear?

K2 APPEARED over the 40 million years or so that India has been colliding with greater Asia. It was "discovered" (ie, by the British) and designated K2 (Karakoram Peak 2) in 1856. The peak was granted the name your correspondent remembers in 1888, after its first surveyor, Col Henry Haversham Godwin-Austen (1834-1923). The previous title is now preferred as being less imperialistic. Ordinarily a mountain would revert to its local name, but K2 is so remote that it appears never to have gained one. — *S McDiarmid, Chapel-en-le-Frith, Stockport*

IS MAN the only animal which experiences baldness as a common sign of advancing age? What evolutionary advantage does this provide — or why else does it occur?

MR RYLANCE'S views that bald men are too old for sex, and Mr Madden's that bald men are unattractive (October 8) are irrelevant, offensive and wrong. The gene for male pattern balding must confer some evolutionary advantage to counterbalance the increased risk of sun-induced scalp cancer. Baldness, like bodily hirsutism, is in fact a sexual traffic light, switched on by male hormones in virile men: eunuchs are smooth-skinned and never bald. Some women find mature bald men attractive, and indeed in Albania the bald head is revered erotically as "the third buttock". — *Celia Moss, Moseley, Birmingham*

ADVANCING AGE leads to retirement, retirement leads to lower income. Nature supplies baldness to help survival by eliminating the cost of haircuts. — *E J March, Buenos Aires, Argentina*

WE ARE told the British gave the world the sports of cricket, soccer and rugby. Of these, only soccer has been widely taken up in those countries that were not part of the empire. Why?

ASSOCIATION football has far fewer laws than cricket or rugby. Being less rigid, it can be improvised to accommodate the number of participants and the terrain. Any roughly spherical object can be used, and a pitch can be a cobbled street or a rough patch of wasteland. Neither cricket nor rugby are as flexible.

Internationally, football was spread by railway, road and factory engineers, teachers, etc, who were involved with the local population. Rugby and cricket devotees tended to be colonial civil servants who socialised within tight, white, English-speaking, middle-class enclaves. — *Dave Juson, Southampton*

THE middle classes used to have "dinner for tea". Now many refer to their evening meal as "supper". Do they take their "dinner" at lunchtime, along with the working class, or do they forgo this repast completely?

TRADITIONALLY the word "dinner" has referred to the main meal of the day — whenever this was eaten. The middle classes have obviously suffered so much under 16 years of Conservative rule that they can no longer afford a main meal of the day, but are forced to subsist merely on snacks (lunch and supper) — enjoying the luxury of dinner only once a week, on Sunday! — *Geoff and Kathryn Bibby, Warrington, Cheshire*

WHAT WAS the single most profitable financial transaction in the history of civilisation?

WHILE five cents an acre is not a bad price for the Louisiana Purchase (September 17), it was only 64 years later, in 1867, that US Secretary of State William Seward negotiated the purchase of Alaska from Russia and got almost 600,000 square miles for about 2 cents an acre ($7.2 million). The wealth that came out of Alaska in the gold rush of 1898 alone would have covered the purchase price tens of times over. And even that amount pales in comparison with the revenues generated by the largest oil field in North America, at Prudhoe Bay. — *John C Logsdon, Juneau, Alaska*

WHO invented the bowler hat?

DENIS NORDEN was once asked this question on the BBC's My Word programme. Jack Longland provided the following answer: "Mr Bewley — the Oxford Dictionary says Bowler — was a hat maker in the 19th century. A famous Norfolk landowner, William Coke, asked him to design a hat with a lower crown than a top hat which was always being swept off his head by overhanging branches when he was out hunting." — *Harold Flammger, Ontario, Canada*

Any answers?

DESPITE family breakdown, single parenthood, etc, approximately 80 per cent of British children live with two parents. What are the comparable statistics for children in 1895, before antibiotics and reductions in death in childbirth? — ***Vivian Cummins, Ontario, Canada***

IN THIS age of electronic communication, why do British banks still require at least four working weekdays after a cheque has been deposited for the money to be available? — ***Jonathan Skipper, Charlottesville, Virginia, USA***

I HAVE heard that Siegfried Sassoon and Robert Graves fell out because of their first world war experiences. Is this true? — ***David Conder, Adisham, Kent***

WHEN will continental drift (Britain is supposedly drifting towards the US) begin to have an effect on the Channel Tunnel? — ***Sue Berntsen, Ankenestrand, Norway***

Answers should be e-mailed to weekly@guardian.co.uk, faxed to 0171/44171-242-0985, or posted to The Guardian Weekly, 75 Farringdon Road, London EC1M 3HQ. Notes & Queries Volume 6 is now available, published by Fourth Estate, price £6.99

In conflicts around the world, the UN has failed spectacularly to halt the bloodshed. But when the West turns its back, asks **Michael Ignatieff**, who else is there to step into the breach?

Decline and fall of a blue empire

IN JULY, I spent a week with the Secretary-General of the United Nations as he travelled through Africa. He toured a church compound in Rwanda, where the decomposed bodies from the genocide of 1994 still litter the churchyard. He flew up to a bush airstrip in Angola to persuade the guerrilla leader, Jonas Savimbi, to end the devastating civil war; he touched down in the middle of the equatorial jungle to pay a call on one of Africa's most notorious rogues, President Mobutu of Zaire. While he dashed around Africa, the UN operation in Bosnia teetered and collapsed. Boutros Ghali watched the fall of Zepa on Mobutu's television; and he began taking the key decisions — to withdraw the UN altogether and hand Bosnia over to the Nato command — while fielding calls in a hotel in Angola.

Disillusion with the UN has become one of the clichés of our time. The reality is much more complex. The UN has real if modest achievements to its credit: a ceasefire and a democratic election in Mozambique; a democratic transition in Namibia; the rebuilding of civil and political society in El Salvador; the successful freezing of the Greek-Turkish confrontation over Cyprus; the rebuilding of Cambodia. In Angola, the UN operation stands a chance of ending Africa's most protracted civil war. In Burundi, a single UN diplomat, Ahmed Ould Abdallah, has succeeded, for two years, in preventing genocide from spreading north from Rwanda.

But as Boutros Ghali confessed on the tour, none of these successes seems to count when measured against the failures in Somalia and Bosnia. And there are other failures too: the inability of the UN to stop the nightmarish civil war in Afghanistan; the collapse of Sierra Leone and Liberia; the Indonesian repression of the East Timorese; the Russians' bloody attempt to crush the Chechens. These are what Boutros Ghali calls "the orphaned conflicts", the ones which the West's promiscuous and selective attention span ignores. Everywhere the UN is at work, he told me, it is struggling against "the culture of death", the fragmentation and collapse of states, the rise of ethnic militias, the cult of violence for its own sake. It is not equal to the task because it wasn't built for it. It is trying to re-invent itself for a world its founders never envisaged. It is no longer policing disputes between states, but within states. It no longer arbitrates between sovereignties, but struggles to keep sovereignties from disintegrating under the strain of civil war. It was intended as an organisation of states and yet it is now called upon, time after time, to protect people against their states.

In order to face up to the culture of death, Boutros Ghali has presided over the biggest military build-up in the UN's history: from 4,000 peacekeepers in 1992 to nearly 70,000 in 1995, scattered in 15 operations around the world. Everywhere he went in Africa, he visited his outposts pinning medals on uniforms, taking salutes at march-pasts, behaving like the emperor of a blue empire. Yet appearances are deceptive. He commands military assets a head of state can only envy, yet he has no power to order them into action, and the demands of impartiality prevent his soldiers from fighting. The UN has the only army in the world which is supposed to win victories without firing a shot. It is the only army whose chief weapon is symbolic: the irrational respect accorded the blue flag and that exalted fiction — the international community — for which it stands.

Those who live by the culture of death — the warlords, militiamen and respectable presidents of states — have all learned how easy it is to fire at those who serve under the blue flag. Each time its authority is defied, the legitimacy of the international community leaches away. The effects are contagious; warlords watch CNN. What Karadzic gets away with today, some African insurgent will try tomorrow.

The UN's response, the Secretary-General made clear, is that where its authority is not respected, it must withdraw. It cannot compromise its neutrality; it cannot take sides in the Bosnian conflict and cannot, in the jargon, "enforce" peace. It should hand the challenge over to Nato. Fortunately, since this is Europe, there is a Nato to hand over to. There is no one for the UN to hand over to in Angola or Rwanda or Burundi. If the UN fails here, then these societies will descend into civil war and genocide once again. What those who have given up on the UN fail to grasp is that there is no one else for these places to turn to.

CONSERVATIVE critics of the UN talk as if most of its humanitarian functions could be privatised. Humanitarian agencies could take over some of the UN's disaster relief. But NGOs can't negotiate ceasefires, rebuild political structures, ease societies towards democratic transitions. And the great powers haven't the slightest interest in taking the UN's place. There are no American presidential elections to be won by bringing peace in Angola.

The great powers have chalked out proximate zones of influence and have left the rest of the world to fend for itself. And fend for itself it should. Parts of the developing world — east Asia, for example — need no help from the UN. They are already giving the developed world a run for its money (and its markets). But the parts of Africa which the Secretary-General visited — Rwanda, Zaire, Angola, Burundi — have nowhere else to turn. What they need, more than the drip-feed of humanitarian assistance, is the reconstruction of their state structures, so that they can contain their own internal conflicts themselves. They need police forces and armies that are not ethnic militias and political élites that are something more than tribal warlords. The UN is the only authority capable of rebuilding states. In Africa, it is pioneering a new form of benign imperialism, saving societies that cannot save themselves, and then exiting before resentment of foreign intervention makes further progress impossible.

Everywhere Boutros Ghali went in Africa there were people who want it to do more, not less. They did not want the UN to pack its bags and go. The Secretary-General was besieged by these expectations: to save one ethnic group from another; to bring justice to victims of genocide; to prosecute perpetrators of war crimes; to monitor ceasefires; to repatriate refugees. These are real tasks, real needs — and the UN is too close to bankruptcy, too starved of funds, to do anything like the job it could.

For this was the final fact of life that came through on his trip. Everywhere he went he told the Africans that the developed world was pulling up the drawbridge, consigning the rest of the world to its fate. The polite phrase is donor fatigue. The reality is moral disengagement. He told the élites of these societies what the rich nations want him to say: that the poor must help themselves or they will not be able to count on any help from anyone else. This was a salutary warning to these élites, but it was also a confession of failure.

For the very moral contract holding the UN together is in danger of unravelling. That is the essential significance of the financial crisis which casts such a shadow over the 50th anniversary. If it does unravel, if the UN does go the way of the League of Nations, the developed world might not notice much, not for a time. Then the chaos would begin to edge closer, and there would be no one to keep it at bay.

Letter from Benin Andrew Potter

Tea and surgery

IT IS A constant irritation, when working for a few days far from Abomey, to see a patient who needs to have an operation, but who arrives too late for it to be performed. "Why didn't he come sooner?" I whine at my long-suffering translator. Everyone, with the exception of the patient himself, feels bad and slightly guilty. "Should we unpack all our equipment and work late into the night to help this patient?" we ask ourselves. But no, we need to rest before an early departure tomorrow. We do, however, inform the patient of our next visit in six months.

A few weeks ago I was up in the Niger region for four busy days of surgery at Galmi hospital. Sure enough, on the last afternoon, as we were packing away our things, filling the car with fuel and checking the tyres, up strolls this young Tuareg. He had brought his father (or was it his grandfather?) for surgery. "Sorry, we're finished," I declared, then added that "Dr Chew, who works here, is excellent and he will do it for you". (Dr Andrew Chew is a general surgeon who does beautiful cataract surgery.) "No, it has to be *you*," insisted the Tuareg. "Where do you work?" "In the south of Benin, over 1,100km from here," I replied. Without a moment's hesitation he promised, "We will come after you." I smiled, handed him our hospital's address and dismissed his suggestion from my mind.

Two weeks later, I was returning home from a short weekend break in Cotonou and, as I drove the car into the garage, noticed that Felicien (who looks after my house) had a sheepish grin on his face.

After greeting him and exchanging a few words he informed me we had company. He was not joking. There, on a mat on the ground, sat a white bearded old man, wrapped in grey turban and voluminous robes. I bent to shake his hand. On the veranda was our young Tuareg. He had made himself very much at home, for he was cooking a meal on a small petrol stove. "Just in time," he said, rising. "I'm cooking dried antelope meat for you." I shook his hand and my head and looked helplessly at Felicien. "Do you want it with macaroni or lentils?" the eager young man continued.

I went further into the house and to my surprise found the young lad who lives across the road bent over a bucket of soapy water scrubbing the clothes of our newly arrived visitors. He, too, gave me a toothy grin. I went to my room to drop my bags.

"Your tea is ready!" called the Tuareg. Now, tea drinking for Tuaregs bears little resemblance to our English tradition of china cups and saucers, Earl Grey and cocked little fingers. To them it is a pastime, a ritual, a male fraternity. Smouldering charcoals held in a conical iron brazier become the focal point for a group of men, one of whom is "Mum". The tea pot is miniature, made of metal, with a hinged lid. The cups are small, glass vessels, resembling medicine pots, and the sweet brew itself is drunk in noisy slurps, while still very hot. I took two or three sips, handed the glass on to Felicien and said, "Try this." He took a draught and, mercifully, disappeared indoors, taking the glass with him.

"We have brought you gifts," declared my visitor. "Some dates," and he handed over a parcel weighing several kilograms, solid with the sticky fruit. Next he emptied out a tiny cloth bag into my hand and I found myself gazing at several pieces of stone, fashioned into various shapes. Whether or not they are actually the stone-age tools that he claimed to have found up in the Niger desert, they do make an interesting topic of conversation.

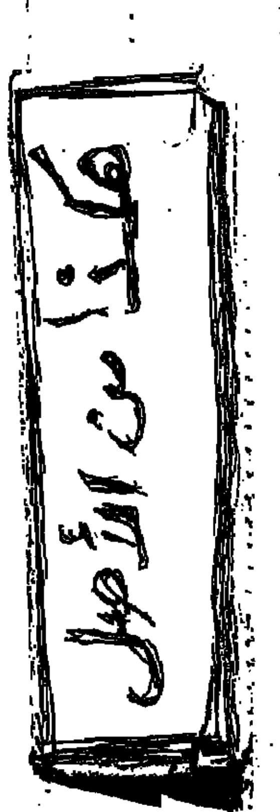
By now our antelope stew was cooked. Four plates were laid out on the cement; one for me, one for Felicien, one for the old, blind man and one for his son. A pile of steaming pasta was then covered with the meat sauce. We all wished each other "Bon appetit!" and retired in separate directions to eat.

After my meal, I decided that I could not have an encampment of Tuaregs settling in the garden for the next few days, and so put on a show of firmness. "Now I will drive you to the hospital," I announced. Reluctantly, they gathered their things together, rolled up the mats and tidied away the cooking pots. Once in the hospital, my nurse found them a bed and we parted company for the night.

Later, as I lay in my own bed thinking back over the day's events, I smiled to myself. "Well, perhaps it wasn't so bad after all. At least they didn't bring their camel."

The following day I operated on the old man and removed the cataract in his one useful eye. His post-operative course was a little difficult as he was not totally co-operative. However, about 12 days later I discharged him and they set off on the long, long road north.

I now have an invitation to visit them in their home 350km beyond Galmi, up in the Niger desert. I wonder if I'll ever make it.



Postman's knack

CINEMA
Derek Malcolm

THERE IS some justice in the film business but not much. So many good films have failed at the box-office — indeed, most of the classics — and so many bad ones have succeeded that it has been made a mockery. Then along comes a film like Mike Radford's **Il Postino** which shows that it is sometimes possible to make an art movie into something approaching a popular success.

An art movie, these days, means anything that is not understandable to Americans without subtitles, and Il Postino, though made by a British director, is in Italian.

It was first shown as the Venice festival opener of 1994 and, though liked, not bought for Britain. In Italy, however, it had the cheek to outgross Schwarzenegger's True Lies and in America it looks like becoming one of the most successful subtitled movies of all time. Now we can see it after all.

One reason for its Italian success is Massimo Troisi, an actor and comedian of enormous popularity, who plays the postman of the title. He died of heart disease at the age of 41, a day after the film was completed, and a week before he was due for a heart transplant at Harefield hospital — an operation he was offered before the film started.

The novel on which the film is based is Chilean but transported from there to Italy — actually to one of the Aeolian islands — where a simple fisherman's son gets a job as a postman and meets Pablo Neruda, the Chilean poet and writer who was exiled for his communist sympathies.

Encouraged to read and write by Neruda, he becomes a different man, only to be killed by fascists at a communist rally. In an extended coda, Neruda (Philippe Noiret) returns to his foreign home and remembers the postman, not just as a triumphant specimen of working-class aspirations but as a friend.

Radford is not starry-eyed about Neruda, presenting him as a man at first unwilling to take the postman seriously and then as a rather patronising mentor. Nor does he make the postman into either an ignorant figure of fun or a sentimental icon.

What could have been a film of some charm but little substance is elevated to something better by both the director and an actor who, though only able to work for an hour a day and that with the greatest difficulty, gives a performance which is so direct and so obviously sincere that even a slightly mannered style is easily forgivable.

To watch Troisi, gaunt and ill, go through his part is to see a real star in action, doing very little but achieving a great deal. Look, for instance, at the early scene where he and his old father are having their evening meal. The silences are as important as the snatched, sometimes half-completed dialogue. It sets the tone for the whole picture which, without its rather unnecessary coda which extends it well beyond what would have been a perfect 90 minutes, would perhaps have been a small masterpiece. The final few minutes, however, destroy much that has gone before.

Radford's picture of island life is well done, with some delicious scenes at the restaurant, where the old proprietor counts every lira and looks askance at the postman's courtship of her daughter, since he's simply not good enough for her and anyway only wants her body.

There are other felicities — a combination of good writing, simple but effective direction and Troisi's amazing capacity to seem totally natural in the part. But the chief glory of the film may lie not in what it actually is but what it defiantly is not. It is rather like seeing a film from another, more genuine age when you could tell a story without pressing too many buttons in order to make your audience laugh or cry.

The probability is that you'll do both while watching the film, especially with the knowledge of Troisi's tragic death.

You should remember, however, that Radford made Another Time, Another Place as his debut and that film has some of the same qualities, even if it didn't have Troisi in it. But God help him if he is now a hot property in America.

If you were to provide an awful warning to a personable British actor, adept at self-deprecating comedy, of what to expect if and when Hollywood tried to make a star of him, you might come up with a description of something like **Nine Months**. It is truly dreadful.



Italian job . . . Chilean exile Pablo Neruda (Philippe Noiret, right) becomes teacher to a simple postman (Massimo Troisi) in Il Postino

Chris Columbus's film, a minor hit in the States, possibly because of Divine intervention, succeeds in magnifying every weakness in Hugh Grant's armoury and refusing to acknowledge any of his strengths. Bad lines, impossible situations and throwaway characterisations conspire to turn him into an attractively tousle-haired idiot. Could this really be the director who made Mrs Doubtfire and Home Alone, and the actor who made Maurice, Remains Of The Day and Four Weddings And A Funeral? Unfortunately, it could.

Grant portrays an English child psychologist — which at least means he doesn't have to attempt a fake American accent — who crashes his Porsche when his live-in girlfriend (Julianne Moore) announces she's pregnant. He is not ready to settle down but is persuaded to do the decent thing and not ask her to have an abortion. Gradually it dawns on him that having a family is a wonderful thing.

That's the plot, and when I tell you that Robin Williams also appears as the Russian émigré obstetrician assigned to Moore ("Now I'll take a look at your Volvo") you may think the film could just have the kind of bad taste fun that would save it from sentimentality.

Not a bit of it. Columbus pulls every emotional string he can find to give the film its pro-family, feelgood conclusion and directs in so slapdash a way that its faults seem to be constantly magnified.

Above all, he hasn't a clue what to do with Grant, who is made to mug furiously throughout in a desperate attempt to put some life into his lines. I think he is a much better actor than a lot of people give him credit for. This film would have such a conclusion laughed out of court. But it isn't his fault. Moore, Tom Arnold and Joan Cusack are equally out on the weakest of limbs.

Haitink triumphs

OPERA
Andrew Clements

WITH JUST a handful of minor qualifications, Covent Garden's Götterdämmerung is a triumph — an ending to its Ring cycle that both elucidates and unquestionably transcends the instalments that have gone before. The totally unqualified success is musical; the cast is first-rate, while Bernard Haitink's conducting is outstanding in its depth of characterisation and emotional perception, driven with a dramatic fierceness that does not relax its grip for a single moment.

If it's his contribution that makes this Götterdämmerung so memorable, then Richard Jones's production often adds very significantly and movingly to the impact. Jones's approach, and his designer Nigel Lowery's, seems to have matured and refined itself through the cycle. There's a pared-down directness in his stage pictures and a much closer analysis of each character: the direction of the Gibichungs is full of subtlety and wit, with foppish, preening Gunther (the excellent Alan Held, making his Opera House debut), a tottering bimbo-ish Gutrune (Vivian Tierney), and Kurt Rydl's magnificently uncompromising Hagen, matching physical presence and vocal power, cruelly propelling the tragedy forward.

If a single image can sum up the feel and texture of Jones's approach it's Hagen's Watch, glowering centrepoint of the first act, with Rydl sitting out his vigil perched on a dustbin wearing Gunther's crown and a diamante cape purloined from Gutrune. It could have been an absurd image — parts of the audience no doubt thought it was, like the rest of the production — but it had followed naturally from what had gone before and seemed not at all contrived, unlike the opening of Act II which has Hagen shooting up before Alberich (the ever dependable Ekkehard Wlaschiha) appears to him like some *deus ex machina*.

But it's the simplest of devices that turn the emotions inside out. When Siegfried disguised as Gunther captures Brünnhilde (Deborah Polaski), he slips a paper bag over her head and leads her into the Gibichung Hall, paraded across the tables like a piece of horse flesh. It's a chilling image of degradation and humiliation that could easily have seemed meretricious.

In the third act, the catastrophe seems to come too early, when Hagen kills Gunther and the back of the set — a 20ft wall of cardboard boxes — collapses to reveal the blackened chimney of Valhalla. But that leaves Jones free to construe the end of the opera as a personal tragedy for Brünnhilde and for the destruction of the gods to be seen through her eyes.

There's little of the usual sense of universal catastrophe, but with Haitink's loving restraint and Deborah Polaski's radiance it becomes an ending of heart-stopping poignancy.

Morality tales that explode in sound and rhythm

DANCE
Angella Johnson

IN GHANA'S ancient oral tradition there is a story about an Ashanti chief who was ousted by his tribe on two occasions for minor infractions, only to be reinstated each time because he was such a wonderful dancer.

Music and dance have always been used by Ghanaian rulers to help defuse social tensions and to unite warring peoples. There is a dance for everything: to praise; to woo; to celebrate birth or death; to work. There is even a dance to insult your enemy.

It is from this repertoire that the Ghana Dance Ensemble draws its inspiration. Founded in 1962, the 35-strong company of Ghana's finest traditional dancers and musicians brings together the dance, music and history of this former British colony in an explosion of rhythms and sounds.

Constantly in demand for performances around the world, the company is making its third trip to Britain since 1993, with two powerful morality dances — The King's Dilemma and Solma.

In The King's Dilemma, an unassuming stranger and the chief's bodyguard are each claiming the honour of killing a wild beast which has been terrorising villagers. A face-off is arranged, which the stranger wins. The bodyguard then steals a symbol of the king's power and plants it on the stranger, who is branded a thief and banished. But the women of the village think otherwise and come together to defend him.

It is African folklore performed with constant emphasis on gravity-defying acrobatics from the male dancers as they leap about the stage. But the dancers also highlight subtle hand movements and intricate dance steps, which combine to create a spellbinding performance.

The ensemble, based at the National Theatre of Ghana in Accra (an impressive modern white-tiled building constructed largely with Chinese money), is the country's only national dance company and the principal training centre for young dancers.

Francis Nii-Yartey, the director and choreographer, believes that much of Ghana's dance tradition is in danger of being buried by rapid urban development. So his mission is to keep it alive by incorporating new ideas.

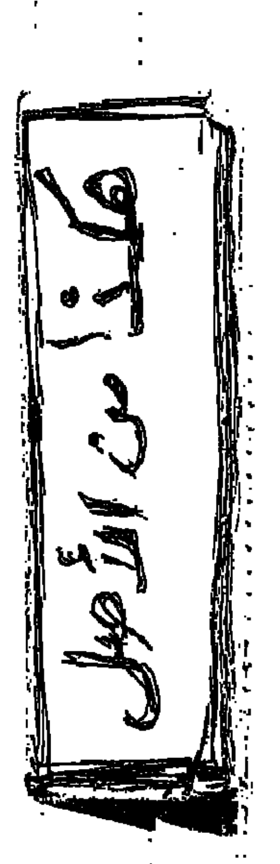
"Culture is dynamic and so we are constantly looking for new ways of working with what we have," he explains. "So anyone who comes expecting to see natives dancing around in grass skirts can forget it."

The company's newest creation, Solma, is a fusion of the creativity and richness of the dance forms inherent in African traditions and the exploration of contemporary dance ideas.

It began when Nii-Yartey visited France in 1993 to meet French choreographers. The following year two of them, Jean-François Duroure and Elena Magnoni, went to Ghana and Solma was born. "It is about Africa: the vibrant markets, loves, lust, jealousies, political aspirations and solidarity in the face of oppression," says Nii-Yartey.

Solma has something for everyone. There is acrobatic clowning, singing, colourful costumes and choregraphed warrier dances in which both men and women move at great speed through a dazzling array of linear positions.

It is a huge, passionate, stirring piece of dance theatre in which a village experiences a journey from celebration, to arrest and execution, to battles, redemption, confrontation and survival. Intelligent, moving and spectacular, it is performed with controlled elegance while at the same time producing a dynamic, almost feverish spectacle.



Paul Eddington has heroically gone public with his alarming skin condition PHOTOGRAPH: DAVID SILLITOE

Actor cast in an unfamiliar role

Adam Sweeting finds that cancer has altered Paul Eddington's appearance but he's still the ultimate pro

AS THE October sunshine casts rippling shadows across his wall, bouncing from the Thames below his window, Paul Eddington reclines on his cushions. He gives what sounds like a satisfied sigh. "It's the actor's dream, isn't it? I'm sitting here in a pleasant room, talking about myself for hours."

The Eddingtons' apartment in London's Docklands is a generous warehouse space. There's a prominently-placed portrait of a younger Eddington, wearing that trademark bemused-in-the-face-of-chaos expression. A couple of Conran's better restaurants are a stone's throw away, but Eddington, a modest Quaker, finds them unacceptably over-priced.

He has taped an interview for the BBC, "where you'll hear all this over again, I'm afraid," he chuckles, gesturing at my Sony machine. Eddington knows that his appearance is going to shock. Thanks to a little-understood skin cancer called mycosis fungoides, his familiar visage is still recognisable, but grievously altered. Hairless, pinched and blotchy, his head looks as if somebody has pickled it and left it out to dry in the sun.

It is little short of heroic that Eddington has gone public with his alarming condition. If he has been guilty of vanity in the past, he is surely turning out his pockets to pay for his sins now. But, he explains, he didn't see that he had any option but to "come out".

"I didn't want to at all. I felt it was my own business really and nobody else's. As long as I was reasonably normal looking, I thought what does it matter? I resented the intrusion very much. But eventually it got so bad we had to put a screen up in the hall to stop people looking through the door, and I spent ages peering out of the window into the courtyard to see if I could make a dash for my car."

The press were typically sympathetic. "There was a double-page spread in the Express once, with a photograph of me and my wife Tricia, arm-in-arm. I didn't read any more than the caption: It said 'He is no longer able to stand unassisted'."

Eddington sighs. Despite his good grace, he looks thin and tired, not least thanks to a chemotherapy session the previous day. "I think they were dying to discover that it was Aids, really. Middle-aged actor, respectable married man, grown-up family — what a wonderful story. Eventually my agent said you're going to have to come clean."

"I feel very frustrated sometimes, because although I'm 68, which is not young by any measurement, in the theatre that doesn't matter. If you're older, you play older parts. Theatre's about life and there are old people in life, and there are lots of wonderful parts for someone such as myself. That's a big disappointment."

Radio work is an obvious option, hence Eddington's marathon stint in BBC Radio 4's adaptation of Winston Churchill's History Of The English Speaking Peoples. "It's long wave, which nobody ever listens to anyway. It's myself and Anna Massey mostly. Other people drift in and out. It's 210 episodes. That makes me sound very rich, but they pay £31 an episode, I will disclose to you. It might be as well to publicise it, I think, and shame the BBC."



As Jim Hacker in Yes, Minister

Eddington isn't the kind of man to throw his weight about or to stage tantrums over pay and conditions. Even after The Good Life had become an enormous hit, he had to be prodded into standing up and asking for an increase in his meagre emolument.

A difficult childhood shuttled him between his family's traditional Quakerism and his mother's Catholicism, though being sent to the Quaker school at Sibford he sees now as a godsend. This wasn't because the school was one of the earliest co-educational boarding schools in Britain, and certainly not because of its batty and autocratic headmaster, but because it gave him friends, a sense of balance, and afforded him "the opportunity of acquiring the ability to sit still for long periods without fidgeting". He adds that "to attract attention on the stage, being still is second only to waving a white handkerchief."

Eddington's best-known characteristics are an exquisitely-timed fumbling quality and the performance of virtually undetectable double-takes. Their collective experiences in Alan Ayckbourn's suburban comedies led to Eddington, Penelope Keith, Richard Briers and Felicity Kendal being cast in The Good Life 20 years ago. Married to Keith's screen-swamping Margo, Eddington found that after years of steady work, he was suddenly running away with a hit show.

Then there was Jim Hacker in Yes, Minister and Yes, Prime Minister. Eddington played Hacker as a prevaricating ignoramus who survives thanks to a streak of cunning shiftiness. This clearly reminded the public of any number of real-life politicians. Eddington is haunted by the incident where he and Nigel Hawthorne, expecting to receive an award from Mary Whitehouse for starring in "the cleanest show on television", were instead called upon to play a scene with Margaret Thatcher. Eddington was desperate to refuse, but couldn't find a way to back out.

"I don't talk much about my politics, but Mrs Thatcher was not one of my favourite people. I said to my colleagues we must refuse, of course. They said no, you're top of the bill — you refuse. I got in touch with the authors and they said it's nothing to do with us. You're getting the award, so you'll have to refuse yourself."

And so, shame-facedly, he didn't, and his disquiet is compounded by the suspicion that Thatcher's enthusiasm for the series stemmed from the way it echoed her personal dislike of civil servants. "I'm afraid that she may have used us in that sense."

Paul Eddington's autobiography, So Far, So Good, is published by Hodder & Stoughton at £17.99

Angel in the wings

LONDON THEATRE
Michael Billington

DENNIS POTTER'S Son of Man, with its vision of an angry, mutinous Christ, exploded on to our TV screens in 1969 leading to threatened prosecutions for blasphemy. Now it has been stirringly resurrected by Bill Bryden at The Pit in the Barbican.

Potter, the most autobiographical of writers, imbues Christ with something of his own searing pain and incandescent fury. This is a Jesus who spews up by the roadside before a big event, who preaches the subversive doctrine of "love your enemies" and who combines messianic fervour with self-doubt. Gazing at the crucifix, he says: "You should have stayed a tree and I should have stayed a carpenter."

Bryden's production, however, unwittingly exposes Potter's chief limitation. Put simply, Potter lacked the gift of poetry. This is the key difference between stage and TV drama. Theatrical poetry, Cocteau famously said, should be "thick like the rigging of a ship and visible at a distance". But on television, where the camera can do half the work, the language of understatement works best.

If Potter's play still works on us emotionally, in spite of its verbal limitations, it is partly because of Bryden's ability to turn theatre into a communal ritual. At one point, after Jesus has preached a sermon on love, the actors move among us shaking hands. It sounds corny: in practice, it is a simple demonstration of theatre's capacity to unify.

By such devices, Bryden turns a TV play into a theatrical event. He is also aided by a strong cast led by Joseph Fiennes as a wiry, angry, abrasive Christ who kicks the money changers out of the temple with positively Marxist fervour.

The event moves us because Bryden creates a sense of folk ritual. But something even more powerful is at work which is to do with theatre's capacity to tap into ancestral religious feelings. It is as if, at a time of waning faith in organised religion, we look to theatre to shore up and sustain our wilting belief.

Something significant and scarcely noticed seems to be happening in our culture which is that, as a counter to the materialism of the age, we increasingly look to art, and specifically to theatre, to provide a substitute religion. God, we are told, is dead: I would argue He is currently very much alive in the British theatre.

Henry James was right when he referred to Ibsen's "strangely inscrutable art". For however often you see **The Master Builder**, now excellently revived by Peter Hall at the Haymarket, there is something unfathomable and mysterious about it that eludes definition.

The story is clear enough. Halvard Solness, an ageing architect, lives in fear of his younger rivals. One day he is visited by a 23-year-old woman, Hilde Wangel, who 10 years earlier was sexually excited by the sight of him climbing a high tower, and who now comes to claim the kingdom he once promised her. Although Solness has no head for heights, Hilde eggs him on to place a wreath on the spire of the new house he is building, thereby causing his destruction.

Obviously the play is explicable in Freudian terms. But watching this exquisitely balanced production it struck me that it is really about the contending opposites in Ibsen's own mind: duty and desire, age and youth, success and failure, guilt and happiness and, above all, reason and the demonic will.

It is the most autobiographical of plays, not just because it was inspired by Ibsen's relationship with the youthful Emilie Bardach, but because it is about the artist's fear of his own creative powers.

All I missed was the sexual electricity that pervaded Adrian Noble's 1989 production. Alan Bates is a fine Solness: a haunted, conscience-stricken figure, terrified of incipient madness and the irrational elements in his own nature. He is also very funny in his attempt to uncover the precise details of his previous encounter with the pubescent Hilda. But I rarely felt he was magnetised by her very presence.

This is no fault of Victoria Hamilton who, as Hilde, is a genuinely exciting discovery, combining steely determination with a strange otherworldliness. But even if the sexual tension is somewhat fitful, it remains an engrossing production that takes you inside the labyrinth of Ibsen's mind.

FEARS THAT Ron Hutchinson's **Rat in the Skull** at the Duke of York Theatre would be rendered obsolescent by the Northern Irish peace process prove unfounded. Hutchinson is writing about the ancestral, tribal and almost visceral opposition between Catholic and Protestant that will not easily be resolved by any constitutional document.

Hutchinson's play is dated only in the sense that it is the product of a particular time: in this case the fear and tension of the mid-1980s. We see Roche, a suspected IRA terrorist, holed up in Paddington Green police station in west London where he is being "interviewed" by Nelson, a hard RUC detective. For much of the play we see the silent Roche taunted and baited by the needling Nelson. But the crucial moment comes when the two men conspire to be left alone by the supervising English constable and Nelson blows the case and his career by beating up the suspect.

Even in 1984 Hutchinson, in this fine and eloquent play, was not suggesting that British troop withdrawal or a patched-up peace was an impossibility. His point was, and still is, that Irish Catholics and Protestants are bound together by history and a fierce pride in a way that the English will never comprehend.

The play survives because it is passionate, honest and ritualistic in its confrontation of the two men. Stephen Daldry's production and William Dudley's design, highlight the ritual nature of the encounter. Roche and Nelson confront each other in a triangular pit, and the whole auditorium is surrounded by a wall of pictures and posters evoking the Troubles. It makes us feel that we too are locked into this hermetic world.

Tony Doyle's Nelson, with his blazer suggesting a man summoned from his holiday and the prowl of a hunter stalking his prey, is a stunning portrait of an obsessive who will sacrifice anything for primal revenge. And Rufus Sewell's Roche, twitching and flinching under the barrage of insults from the provoking Nelson, suggests a man in whom violence builds up with volcanic pressure.

The world of wizardly Wystan

Andrew Motion

Auden
by Richard Davenport-Hines
Heinemann 406pp £20

Wystan and Chester
by Thekla Clark
Faber 140pp £12.99

IN HIS Introduction to Thekla Clark's beguiling memoir, Wystan And Chester, James Fenton reminds us that when Larkin reviewed Homage To Clio in 1960 he said "No one is going to justify [Auden's] place in literary history by The Shield Of Achilles, any more than Swinburne's is justified by Poems And Ballads: Third Series."

The judgment was typical of its time. As soon as Auden left England for America in 1939, his native readers commonly agreed that the change did him nothing but harm. Converting accusations of cowardice and anti-homosexual prejudice, they protested that the loss of a local landscape had resulted in imaginative dilution, and the discovery of wide-open spaces in sprawling verbosity.

Several of Larkin's surviving contemporaries — Kingsley Amis, Anthony Powell — still take this view. But as new generations of readers have emerged, the consensus has shifted. The charge of chickening-out has been overwhelmed by evidence of Auden's various kinds of bravery; his reasons for wanting to escape what he called England's "terribly provincial . . . tiny jungle" have found widespread sympathy, and many of the poems he wrote in America have been reckoned not simply among the best he wrote, but the most rooted, and the most perspicacious about his origins. In fact, these days, the whole body of his work is more highly regarded than it has been at any time in the past.

The popular success of Tell Me The Truth About Love (as a spin-off from Four Weddings And A Funeral) is proof of his common touch. The wealth of Auden studies is evidence of his enduring importance in the academies. His influence on many contemporary poets — including Fenton — is a sign of his unflagging ability to enthrall, excite and affirm.

As the share price of his poetry has risen, so has interest in its background. Since his death 22 years ago, two full-length biographies have appeared — by Humphrey Carpenter and Charles Osborne — and although there's still a great deal of editorial work to be done on the poems, letters to collect and neglected prose to gather in, the broad shape of his life and interests is well defined. Richard Davenport-Hines certainly thinks so. He gratefully acknowledges his debts to existing accounts, using familiar material as the backbone of his work and as an excuse for investigating neglected issues. His book is more nearly a history of ideas than a narrative of circumstances, more interested in Auden's work than the facts we expect from "a shilling life".



Auden (left) with T S Elliot and his wife, Valerie, in 1961

WHILE THIS means we sometimes move too rapidly past practical details, it also allows us time to pick carefully and with fascination through the huge department store of Auden's mind. No one can hope to write a biography which would easily please its subject, but in this case it's hard not to suppose that Auden would have approved. "Since the work of the artist is openly subjective and 'feigned' history," he once said, "what matters is not what happened to him, but what he has made his experience into."

Long before he wrote this, Auden had decided that the transformation of "experience" into "work" had almost as much to do with the will as anything resembling inspiration. Even in childhood he collected scenes and settings with the bright-eyed passion of a geologist. He studied types like a social scientist.

By the time someone at school suggested to him that he might try writing poems, much of the material with which he would make his name had already been identified: the limestone landscapes of his early memories; the religious and clinical interests he shared with his father; the sexual identity which at one liberated him and left him feeling vaguely "indecent".

Davenport-Hines chronicles these things patiently, and while he sounds less confident when characterising the Auden voice, he writes well about the drive towards self-creation. It was an effort which led Auden into himself even as it spurred him to possess the world around him. At Oxford he had what his tutor, Neville Coghill, called "great intellectual prestige" and he dominated his contemporaries. In Germany in the late twenties, his cruising and working was a sustained "attempt to complete [him]self". In his earliest published poems he laced together ideas derived from (among others) Emile Coue, John Layard, Homer Lane and Freud to produce lines at once highly personal and radically investigative. It is this combination which makes his recurring image of the secret agent so expressive. Auden's practice was both veiled and interventionist, cloaked and co-ordinating.

The aim was to achieve a poetry of limitless possibilities governed by a profound sense of order — and as the years went by the order became increasingly marked. Even though his life in the thirties was packed with incidents and travels (to various schools in England as a teacher, to Iceland, Spain and China), his own account of it was plotted round a few outstanding episodes. One was what Davenport-Hines calls a "transfiguration of love" he experienced in 1933 and described in the poem written that year beginning "Out on the lawn I lie in bed"; one was the crisis of cruelty he witnessed at a whaling station in Iceland; a third was his return to Christianity in 1939.

In this same year, the year that he went to America, he also met Chester Kallman, who more nearly than anyone else became his constant companion, and who focused all the lessons in life that he had previously learned.

Much of Auden and Kallman's early time together was spent in New York. When the war ended they took to living for a part of each year in Ischia, then Austria. Thekla Clark, who first met them on Ischia, is touching and revealing about these homes away from home, since she is able to report on Kallman more intimately than more distanced biographers. He emerges as generally delightful and occasionally dementing — a wonderful letter writer, an ebullient performer, and a chronically unfaithful lover. Without the pleasure he gave, and the pain, Auden would not have become such a wise or such a wizardly poet.

One of the surprises of the biography and the memoir is to see not just how deeply but how diversely Auden responded. While Kallman protested that he was "at least [a] pure" homosexual, Auden had several affairs with women and proposed to at least three of them. This tells us something about the "guilt" of sexuality, as well as a good deal about the character of his curiosity.

Even while his domestic habits hardened into a parody of themselves, and the dense language of his greatest poems thinned into something virtually avuncular, he remained capable of extraordinary surprises. In the years since his death, these have tended to be overshadowed by stories of his opinion-thrusting, slipper-shuffling late days in New York and (especially) Oxford.

No poet since Shelley has feasted so magnificently on ideologies, and none since Byron has worked his self into so amply humane a body of work. Davenport-Hines, in his scrupulous way, lets us see the first of these things more clearly than any previous biographer. Thekla Clark, chatty but shrewd, lets us see the latter. As for the poems in the new selection: they might look like an attempt to cash in on Four Weddings, but in fact they describe a key element in his great civilising ambition. "Come buy," as Bateson once said of Larkin.

Paperbacks

Nicholas Lezard

A Biographical Dictionary of Film, by David Thomson (André Deutsch, £14.99)

THE THIRD edition of the most splendid, idiosyncratic and intelligent of reference books; its subject may be films and television, but Thomson's intelligence is so luminous and infectious, his judgments so thrillingly acute, that you quite simply end up a wiser and more wonderful person for having absorbed or argued with them, whether you count yourself a film buff or not. Grab it.

The Daydreamer, by Ian McEwan (Vintage, £4.99)

WHEN we say we love children's literature, asks McEwan, "are we speaking up for, and keeping the lines open to, our lost, nearly forgotten selves?" This book does just that: a sequence of Ovidian transformation stories about a young boy's imagination, perfectly judged, scary, poignant, meaningful; he makes it look easy, but this is brilliantly achieved. The story about the cat made me blub, twice, and the whole book should blow your kids' minds.

Being Human, by Mary and John Gribbin (Phoenix, £6.99)

WHAT has made us human, say the Gribbins, is a combination of sociobiology (they are thick as thieves with Edward Wilson, nothing wrong with that) and climatic pressures. Much else besides that, which they touch on, and even with their rather irritating prose style this is a good, solid introduction to the subject. Unless, of course, you are a creationist.

Roland Barthes, by Roland Barthes (Papermac, £10.00)

OF HIS father, who died when Roland was one year old, he writes: "The father . . . was lodged in no memorial or sacrificial discourse." This is sweet, and yet slightly *frappé*, if not chilling. A Barthesian autobiography, then, a third-person auto-deconstruction, funny, teasingly aware that it "is of no importance to anyone".

Letters, Volume One: 1926-1951, by John Betjeman, ed Candida Lycett Green (Minerva, £7.99)

HERE is Betjers on his teddy bear, Archibald Ormsby-Gore: "Archibald has accepted the Incumbency of Raum's Episcopal Chapel, Homerton, E17 . . . It has always been associated with the Evangelical party and he will have to wear a black gown in the pulpit as the Surplice is considered ritualistic." Plenty more letters from the edge of darkness like that one.

Joining the train gang

Giles Foden

Ghost Train
by Sean O'Brien
Oxford 54pp £6.99

LIKE Philip Larkin, who was never very happy wherever he lived, Sean O'Brien has been much concerned with the poetry of place. Like Larkin again, though from a very different political standpoint, he is disaffected with the state of England: the factories and the prisons, the tenements and the football terraces.

The latter figure in O'Brien's new volume, Ghost Train, which was awarded the Forward Poetry Prize for the Best Collection earlier this month. He casts a cold but sympathetic eye on "the Toon Army *tsunami*" of fans in Newcastle-upon-Tyne, where he lives. "A seated army of convicts/ Will be thundering WOR BALL/ At fainthearted southern referees all winter."

O'Brien has many fans among poetry readers, and the award confirms his position as one of the country's most significant younger poets. One of the achievements of the collection is to breathe new life into the seemingly moribund sub-genre of railway poetry, which has not flourished since Auden's Night Mail.

Although O'Brien might share some of Auden's political concerns (yet without, in the case of this beefy, bred-in-the-bone socialist, the posturing), he puts an entirely different gloss on trains. Here we have, not the unhesitating destination-driven mania of the government postal machine that Auden sang, but the disturbed, dislocated journey of a lost urban soul, not knowing what its destination should be: "It is somewhere/ In moments of weakness at Worcester Shrub Hill/ Or in Redditch or Selby you wished/ You could enter. . ."

In this poem, Somebody Else, O'Brien rescores Rimbaud's dictum "Je suis un autre" to the sad music of contemporary Britain. It is a familiar tune for the poet, who has always evinced "a northerner's satirical reactions to the complacency of the . . . Thatcherite South-east", as one critic put it.

O'Brien takes an uncompromising stand against snobbery, class distinction and — more specifically — the form of historical exclusion favoured by the Tory right. Thus, in Revenants, a poem remembering the second world war dead, he pays tribute to the squandered legacy of an event which was retrospectively supposed to have inadvertently enfranchised the working classes, raising the ghost of ". . . the England/ We speak for, which finds you/ No home for the moment or ever./ You will know what we mean, as you meant/ How you lived, your defeated majority/ Handing us on to ourselves. We are the masters now."

Yet, for all his commitment, O'Brien has avoided the aesthetically problematic rhetoric of "protest poetry" directed towards a political aim. That avoidance becomes the subject of one of the funniest poems: "When I walk by your house, I spit./ That's not true. I *intend* to . . . But I do not . . . When you're at breakfast with the Daily Mail,/ Remember me . . . If I were you, I'd be afraid of me." Funny, but haunting too, and hardly Larkinesque.

Adventures in Ecoland

Giles Foden

The Island of the Day Before
by Umberto Eco
trans. William Weaver
Secker & Warburg 515pp £16.99

MEDIEVAL monks, interpreting holy books with reams of marginal, sometimes subversive commentary, were said to move their lips as they read in silence. It was as if the meaning of a word were dependent on its physical properties: if that word were "God", one can see how important this might be. St Bernard is thought to have been the first to have abandoned this "chewing of the word". Later scholars would connect the habit with the doctrine of transubstantiation — the ultimate interpretation, since it transforms utterly the object in question.

As a semiotician-novelist, medieval monk reincarnate, Umberto Eco is in the business of interpretation as much as creation. Reading him is a little like chewing the word. The flow of the reading experience is stymied by a bundle of excessive meanings. An arcane architecture holds up this process of being held up, from the riddling semantics that perplex Adso of Melk in The Name Of The Rose to the Templar secrets of Foucault's Pendulum.

And always, with this exuberant, exasperating writer, there is the pleasure of the list; the layers of scholarly accumulation at one level, the sheer piling of word upon word at another. Difference and universality are the key notes struck as Eco combines elements to build his Tower of Babel, his Book of Nature, his Homeric catalogue, his system of systems. (He has done a lot of academic work on the search for a universal language, recently publishing a book on the subject.)

It is with systems of maritime nomenclature that the editor-narrator (one of the discovered-manuscript-in-a-desk species) struggles at the opening of Eco's astonishing new novel, The Island Of The Day Before. For this section Eco's distinguished translator, William Weaver, deserves a medal:

"For gun-port he uses *sabordo*, and I allow him the word gladly as it recalls the seafaring books most of us read as children; he talks about the *parrochetto*, which is for us a foretopsail but since the French *perruche* is the topgallant, there is not telling what he is referring to when he says he was under the parruchetta. Furthermore, sometimes he calls the mizzen the *artimon*, in the French way, but what can he mean then when he writes *misaine*, which is how the French identify the foremast (but, alas, not the English, for whom the *mezzana* is the mizzen. God help us?)."

"He" is Roberto della Griva, a 17th century Italian nobleman who, following escapades in the Thirty Years War, education in the salons of Paris and a period of incarceration in the Bastille, is sent on a mission by Cardinal Richelieu, of Three Musketeers fame. The latter feature tangentially in the narrative, just one of a number of allusions to adventure stories — the genre of projected male desire — as do chemical and biological "atomies" and a wooden proto-computer (something like a chest of drawers) based on the principle of combinatorial differences. More central is a mystic homoeopathic system, the Powder of Sympathy, also known as the Weapon Salve: "The Knight spoke to us of a weapon that, suitably treated, brings relief to the wound. But take that same weapon and place it by a fire, and the wounded man, even if miles away, will scream with pain."

Roberto finds himself shipwrecked not on a desert island, but on another, deserted ship, anchored off a desert island: Eco goes one step further than Michel Tournier's Vendredi in reconsidering, postcolonially, the tale of Robinson Crusoe. Much is predicated on how Roberto will get to the island — a nice conceit, and one which dovetails with the intellectual underpinnings of the story.

ROBERTO'S mission is to find out what the English are doing in the search for the Punto Fijo, the defining point which will allow mariners to understand longitude, thus opening up whole new navigable vistas of imperial desire. The island — of the day before, as it were on the liminal moment of a time zone — is a symbol for desire, just as is Lilia, the shadowy Lady to whom Roberto addresses his manuscript.

The English method turns out to involve the Powder of Sympathies. The details of the method — too disgusting and ingenious to reveal, except to say they involve a warm eunuch with a knife in London and a wounded dog moaning, far away — depend on a gap, a distinction, a measure. So, too, do Roberto's desire for his Lady, and his wish to reach the island.

This "taste for parallels" is how it goes in Ecoland, where the relative, the contingent, the condition we swim in, is inscribed in the universal and timeless. As we chew over these difficult concepts, we learn that there is a psychological relativity as well; Roberto is dogged by a dark double, his bastard brother Ferrante — dream or reality it's hard to tell. Lonely on the ship, Roberto begins to write a novel based on Ferrante's exploits (which include ravishing the Lady), unseating the very structure of Eco's own story, transforming it utterly.

This book transforms the reader, too, and its connections with Eco's previous work show signs of a master-plan developing, one with lessons for a divided, atomised world. Eco has set himself the vast task of redeeming the time through a form of information retrieval: his new, excessive combinations generate meaning like breeding cells. Rummaging through the drawers of history, crossing scholarly time zones, he shows us how we can be different at the same time as being the same, how each can think "of an Island made to his measure, or, rather, to the measure of his dreams" and yet it be the same Island for all.

Second childhood

James Wood

The First Man
by Albert Camus
Hamish Hamilton 261pp £14.99

THIS BOOK is little more than a tuft of writing, torn from something larger which died with Camus in his road accident in 1960. The 144-page manuscript found in the wreckage of Michel Gallimard's car is an intensely lopped autobiographical account of Camus's childhood in Algiers.

Certainly, the ink is still wet, and in places it runs: characters change names on the same page, and in two places, writing about the hero's mother and a beloved schoolteacher, Camus inadvertently replaces their fictional names with those of his own mother and his own great influence at the lycée in Algiers, Louis Germain. Many of the pages, like ties knotted as reminders, are crowded at the bottom with self-entreaties: "Careful, change the names"; "The book should be heavy with things and flesh."

But this book is a revelation and a joy: for against the tendency of Camus's earlier fiction, it is "heavy with things and flesh". Camus's greatest deficiency as a novelist is his unwillingness to linger over a detail when he might ponder an idea. His brave scepticism holds his characters in a somewhat iron fist; indeed, The Plague deliberately echoes the determinism of Greek tragedy. The Fall, Camus's last novel, cedes fiction to the philosophical essay. These books are no less moving for their monumentalism; but they are less alive than The First Man, which bursts with the freshness of childhood memory, and which realises Algiers with almost artless zeal. Here, rather than ponder endurance, Camus savours the details that help us to endure.

Camus's unfinished book is a revelation and a joy

Through his surrogate, Jacques Cormery, Camus tells the story of his childhood and early schooldays in Algiers. Now in his forties, Jacques returns from France to Algeria in the mid-fifties to visit his elderly mother. The journey provokes him to confront his double heritage as a French Algerian. This was a struggle Camus was making at the time of writing, as the Algerian war of independence splayed his political sympathies for both the native French and native Arab communities. But that war is the thinnest of backdrops in this book; and politics is soon forgotten in the rush to collect the silver of childhood recollection.

Camus can hardly bear, it seems, to sign his hero's release papers: Jacques's life corresponds almost exactly to what we know of Camus's. Like his creator's, Jacques's early years are spent in abominable poverty. His father died before Jacques knew him, in the first world war. His mother is illiterate, gentle, of Spanish origin. He is brought up by his almost mute mother and stern grandmother. A teacher coaches the bright young boy without payment; he is recompensed by Jacques's scholarship to the Algiers lycée.

Jacques is overjoyed to be returning, but he has "a secret exultation . . . the satisfaction of one who has made good his escape and is laughing at the thought of the look on the guards' faces". Jacques is surrounded by love as a child, yet he has the fighting instinct of a prisoner: "For all his life it would be kindness and love that made him cry, never pain or persecution, which, on the contrary, only reinforced his spirit and his resolution."

And this, implies Camus, is nothing less than the paradoxical inheritance of the French-Algerians: French but not merely French, settlers too poor to be colonists, yet too uprooted to be settled.

This world of poverty makes riches of its reductions — just as the plague-tormented inhabitants of the enclosed town of Oran would study the timetable of trains they could not take. Likewise, Camus's style turns deprivation into luxurious detail. This is the great treasure of the book. With loving nostalgia, Jacques remembers how rarely he and his schoolfriends would have the money for "a single paper cornet of fried potatoes". Jacques tells us how they would open the cornet flat to search for the last morsel. A page is spent on this. Camus himself scours his lost world for savoury crumbs; the result is a revolution in his style.

Suddenly, he is attentive, precise, vivid. He has Jacques describe the threadbare furniture of his home, how each piece was "pushed back against the wall" (a wonderful noticing); how, to economise, his raincoat was always too large so that the only recourse was "to puff out his raincoat at the waist in order to make what was ridiculous look original".

This strange *Bildungsroman* celebrates not, as is usual, the escape into learning, but the escape from poverty into the richness of poverty. In Camus's earlier work, this idea is philosophically ennobled as the freedom to choose entrapment, the freedom to choose our inevitable lack of freedom; life as a series of joyous defeats. Wonderfully, in The First Man, and uniquely in his work, Camus heeds the advice he gave in The Myth Of Sisyphus, that the writer subjugate his intelligence, for the work of art "is born of the intelligence's refusal to reason the concrete. It marks the triumph of the carnal". Camus does not reason the concrete in this final book; and the concrete, in the form of the remembered world of boyhood, rewards him and his readers by spilling over into a world of fleeting, rich and unreasonable abundance. On this evidence, Camus's greatest novel died with him.

Uncoilings of a snake

D J Taylor

Jackson's Dilemma
by Iris Murdoch
Chatto & Windus 249pp £15.99

WHY READ Iris Murdoch? Humour? No, though there is such a thing as the Murdoch joke. Plausible approximations of English life? No with emphasis. Forty years on from Under The Net, which almost had her marked down as an honorary Angry Young Man, most of Murdoch's appeal lies out there on the margins of fiction, away from character and motivation; consisting instead of the pleasure to be gained in watching an original and dangerously self-engrossed mind merely uncoiling itself, like a snake in the sun. Rather in the manner of late-period Henry James, these uncoilings have now hit a point of stylisation and whimsy at which they become impenetrable to anyone not on the case for a very long time. One no longer reads Murdoch so much as decode her.

Bustling on along this path, Jackson's Dilemma is less the quintessence of Murdoch as a quintessence of that quintessence, a gritty residue scraped from a crucible full of burnt-up allusions and habitual tics.

The cast is that usual collection of wealthy exquisites (cars, houses, servants but no visible means of support), gentleman scholars with names like Benet and Tuan grappling with Heidegger and Maimonides, precocious children.

Quite a lot of Jackson's Dilemma reads like notes for a longer book whose final import has somehow escaped her grasp. Entertaining as this slice of Daisy Ashford gothic is, you wonder about its likely effect on newcomers to her work. Going back to Henry James, imagine the young reader of 1915 deciding to start out on The Golden Bowl. Like many an artist in old age, there is a sense in which Murdoch is, alas, only accessible to her fans.

ILLUSTRATION: BARRY LARKING

In search of wilderness

Paul Evans

TO GO IN search of wilderness is also to search for that wild place in one's soul. For those of us who turn our faces to the north, that wild place is a bog. Thoreau said, "It is vain to dream of a wilderness distant from ourselves. There is none such. It is the bog of our brain and bowels, a primitive vigour of nature in us that inspires that dream."

But a dark, squelchy habitat occupying the brain and bowels is not everyone's idea of paradise. For others, oriented by their own internal lodestones, it may be mangrove swamp, tree-fern forest, veld or dry desert that holds the meaning of wilderness.

Earlier this month, on a small uninhabited island off the west coast of Scotland — which I will call Eilean after the Gaelic name for island (I am sworn to secrecy not to reveal its location) — the real weather had returned. After a hot dry summer most of that weather was coming in cold, wet and sideways from the Atlantic. Every 10 minutes or so the clouds would break, the sun would stream down on to sea-cliffs and mountain tops on surrounding islands, and rainbows would appear.

Accessible from the nearest large island only twice a day at low tide, Eilean was inhabited by a small crofting community well within living memory. The remains of their fields, derelict lichen-bearded walls and stone pathways through the wetlands are clearly visible. Only a few sheep roam here; not enough to completely repress the little birch woods that are beginning to regenerate on the rocky ridges. As the whole island became soggier and boggier, nature continued reclaiming Eilean from centuries of cultivation.

Without drainage, the bogs reclaim what were once barley fields, cattle pasture and potato plots. The higher ground is dominated by heather and cowberry, with occasional prostrate junipers. The bogs on Eilean are huge Sphagnum moss gardens with insectivorous sundews, cross-leaved heath, bog asphodel and cotton grass.

Bogs form where the decomposition of vegetation cannot exceed production. And here Sphagnum moss is the key. This forms the peat which accumulates on oxygen-poor water. The source of water, the available nutrients, the timing of wetting and drying, and the overall temperature regime influence the type of peatland development — bog, marsh, fen, or a combination of these. Peatlands occur throughout the world, but the species found on Eilean reflect a type of northern Atlantic bog that can be recognised in eastern North America.

Peat cutting for fuel has been carried out on Eilean for centuries, and this encouraged a younger stage of bog development. But so many of the world's peat bogs have been devoured by huge open-cast mining operations for the horticulture industry. Britain has lost 98 per cent of its lowland raised bogs in this way. Even in the huge tracts of peatlands in Canada and northern Europe, conservationists are desperately worried that this wonderful habitat is under threat.

As Charles Johnson says in Bogs Of The Northeast (of America), we should "cherish [bogs] as gifts and fellow travellers on earth's odyssey — to allow some to exist on their own, to go where they will. We owe as much to this planet and to all its children yet to come".

One night on Eilean, the gales stopped and the clear sky filled with stars. Suddenly and mysteriously a crescent of light appeared with long streams of pale fire walking like wraiths across the sky. Slowly the crescent moved to the northern horizon and became a glowing, slow-walking spiral. This was a glimpse of the northern lights, the aurora borealis, common closer to the Arctic Circle but much rarer here.

The lights may be charged particles carried by solar winds hitting atoms in the ionosphere, 100km above the earth where magnetic fields carry them towards the poles. But I felt, as ancient northern peoples have always felt, that they were living beings on a journey to the deep north; travelling through the wild places of the soul.

Chess Leonard Barden

VISHY ANAND'S strategy in the Intel world championship was to hold his own for the first half of the match after which, his supporters argued, Garry Kasparov would become frustrated and lash out with unsound play. The strategy misfired badly and it was Anand who made all the mistakes in the second half to lose 10½-7½.

Experienced players know the value of offering a draw when a poor position starts to improve late in the game. The odds are that your opponent, influenced by the previous advantage, will decline. If your position then further improves, the refuser's play often goes to pieces.

Whether by accident or design, Kasparov produced a more sophisticated version of this ploy. Anand won game nine well, but in game 10 he unwisely repeated a complex opening from game six.

Garry Kasparov-Vishy Anand, Ruy Lopez

1 e4 e5 2 Nf3 Nc6 3 Bb5 a6 4 Ba4 Nf6 5 0-0 Nxe4 6 d4 b5 7 Bb3 d5 8 dxe5 Be6 9 Nbd2 Nc5 10 c3 d4 11 Ng5 The sacrifice worked out by Tal and introduced by Karpov against Korchnoi in the 1978 title match. If Qxg5 12 Qf3 is strong. **dxc3 12 Nxe6 fxe6 13 bxc3 Qd3 14 Bc2!** The imaginative product of a weekend's homework, improving on the 14 Nf3 of game six.

Qxc3 15 Nb3 Nxb3 Played after 45 minutes thought. **16 Bxb3 Nd4** If Qxa1 17 Qh5+ and now (a) g6 18 Qf3 Nd8 19 Qf6 Rg8 20 Bg5 Qd4 21 Rd1 or (b) Kd7(Ke7/d8? 18 Bg5+) 18 Bxe6+! Kxe6 19 Qg4+ Kf7 20 Qf3+ Ke6 21 Qxc6+ Bd6 22 exd6 Qe5 23 Bd2 with the decisive threat Re1.

17 Qg4! Qxa1 18 Bxe6 Rd8 If Nxe6 19 Qxe6+ and 20 Bg5. **19 Bh6** So that if Qxf1+ 20 Kxf1 gxh6 21 Qh5+ and 22 Qf7 mate.

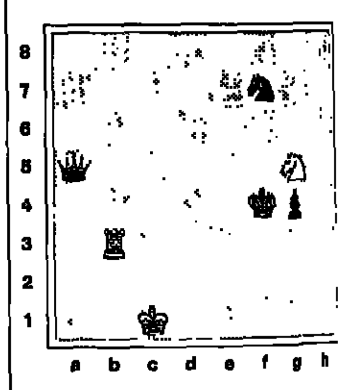
Qc3 20 Bxg7 Again threatening Qh5+, so Black has to return the rook. **Qd3 21 Bxh8 Qg6** Black goes into the ending a pawn down. His last chance to keep some material was Ne2+ 22 Kh1 Ng3+ 23 hxg3 Qxf1+, but 24 Kh2 Qd3 25 Bf5 is too strong an attack. Everything till here was Kasparov's pre-game analysis.

22 Bf6 Bc7 23 Bxe7 Qxg4 24 **Bxg4 Kxe7 25 Rc1!** Stopping c5, the last chance for counterplay. The white K-side pawn roller decides the game. **c6 26 f4 a5 27 Kf2 a4 28 Ke3 b4 29 Bd1 a3 30 g4 Rd5 31 Rc4 c5 32 Ke4 Rd8 33 Rxc5 Ne6 34 Rd5 Rc8 35 f5 Rc4+ 36 Ke3 Nc5 37 g5 Rc1 38 Rd6 Resigns.**

Kasparov's aggressive demeanour during this game ended the phoney war of the first eight games when he had been unnaturally polite about his opponent. It also had its effect in game 11 when Anand rejected an early draw, then later fell for a trap.

Kasparov denied any conscious gamesmanship. Perhaps Anand should have recalled the advice of the old pre-war grandmaster Milan Vidmar, whose rule was always to take the quickest possible draw after a bad defeat, so as to restore psychological balance.

No 2393



White mates in two moves, against any defence (by Klara S, 1862). This week's puzzle survives from mid-Victorian times when women chess players were discouraged, so the unknown composer did not allow publication of her full name.

No 2392: 1 Rg1. If Kd5 2 Ka5 and 3 Qd4. If Kd3 2 Ka3 Kc3/c2 3 Qc4. If Kxf5 2 Kc5 Ke6 3 Qg4. If Kxf3 2 Kc3 Ke2 3 Qe4. If Kf4 2 Kc3/c5 and 3 Qg4.

Quick crossword no. 285

Across

1 Permitted (7)
8 Flow out (7)
9 Having great knowledge — memorised (7)
10 Futile (7)
11 Close-fitting tartan trousers (5)
13 Hospitality to all comers (4,5)
15 Devoted (9)
18 God, to Muslims (5)
21 Promoter (7)
22 Drop of liquid (7)
23 Firmness of purpose (7)
24 Thin, silky fabric (7)

Down

1 Distribute in portions (5)
2 Permission — to depart (5)
3 Royal residence (7,6)
4 Infer (6)
5 Have very brief holiday (4,3,3,3)
6 Elaborate cake (6)
7 Tenant under lease (6)
12 Actor's part (4)
14 Settee (4)
15 Abandon — a barren region (6)
16 Sleepy (6)
17 Object aimed at (6)
19 Bloodsucking insect (5)
20 "Laughing" animal (5)

Last week's solution

■	M	E	Z	Z	O	S	O	P	R	A	N	O
O	■	L	■	E	■	U	■	E	■	L	■	N
P	R	E	S	S	■	P	E	R	S	I	S	T
E	■	G	■	T	■	P	■	S	■	E	■	H
N	E	A	R	■	R	E	S	P	O	N	S	E
I	■	N	■	R	■	R	■	I	■	■	■	W
N	E	T	H	E	R	■	A	R	M	A	D	A
G	■	■	■	D	■	R	■	E	■	M	■	R
W	O	R	K	S	H	O	P	■	S	N	A	P
O	■	A	■	T	■	T	■	I	■	E	■	A
R	A	D	I	A	N	T	■	B	E	S	E	T
D	■	I	■	R	■	E	■	I	■	I	■	H
S	H	O	O	T	I	N	G	S	T	A	R	■

Bridge Zia Mahmood

ONE OF the main differences between rubber bridge and tournament bridge is in the use of the word "double". At rubber bridge, a double almost always means: "I do not think that my opponents can make what they have just bid." Generally, a double at the rubber bridge table is "for blood" — or for penalties, if you are squeamish.

In the tournament game, we have takeout doubles, negative doubles, competitive doubles, responsive doubles, game-try doubles, etc. This is because in tournament bridge — particularly in pairs — the emphasis is on reaching your own side's par contract, and not on penalising the opponents.

A rubber bridge player who doubles four spades and collects 500 instead of a vulnerable game will feel no pain as he writes his score in the plus column. But a duplicate player who scores 500 instead of 600 or 650 will not be at all happy. That is why many tournament experts go so far as to treat the double of an opening bid of four spades as a takeout double — just as a double of one spade, or three spades, would be. If a vulnerable opponent opens four spades and you want to enter the auction at all, you are likely to have a hand such as:

♠7 ♥AK73 ♦AQ2 ♣AJ1095

This is an ideal takeout double. If your partner has little and passes, you will probably beat four spades, while if he has a good suit to bid, you will be able to reach your side's best contract and not have to settle for an inadequate penalty. But what if you have this hand:

♠KQJ95 ♥K863 ♦J62 ♣2

and an opponent opens four spades! At the Four Stars championships in Brighton this year, this was the deal:

North
♠ None
♥ J97
♦ AKQ95
♣ 98764

West
♠ A1087642
♥ None
♦ 74
♣ KJ53

East
♠ 3
♥ AQ10542
♦ 1083
♣ AQ10

South
♠ KQJ95
♥ K863
♦ J62
♣ 2

When David Price and Peter Czerniewski were North-South, West opened four spades and all the other players passed. Peter Czerniewski wanted to double, but that would have been for takeout, so he just had to pass and pray that things would work out.

His prayers were spectacularly answered, for at the other table the bidding was:

South	West	North	East
	4♠	No	No
Double	No	5♠	No
6♥	No	No	Double
No	No	No	

South just couldn't bear to be robbed. He doubled for takeout in the hope that North would pass anyway — but North had a great hand facing short spades and high cards elsewhere.

North's bid of five spades asked South to pick a suit at the six level. South picked one, and East's double was not for takeout.

The resulting 2,000 penalty will ensure that on South's mind the lesson is for ever etched: if you're playing takeout doubles and you have a penalty double, you just have to pass!

Last post . . . Red Rum, Britain's most famous and best-loved racehorse and winner of the Grand National an unequalled three times, died last week, aged 30. He was humanely destroyed after being found distressed in his box and was later buried at Aintree's winning post, where his victories brought joy to millions of punters. He is seen here receiving a pat from his admiring fans in 1978 PHOTO: NOBBY CLARKE

Sports Diary Shiv Sharma

Forest keep the home fires burning

BRITISH football clubs involved in European adventures had a week which they would like to forget in a hurry. Of the eight teams engaged in various competitions, only Nottingham Forest had something to smile about. The rest either lost or drew.

In the Uefa Cup, Leeds ended up the losers in an eight-goal thriller against PSV Eindhoven at Elland Road. In an astonishing see-saw game, the home side went ahead after six minutes through a goal by Gary Speed. Rene Eijkelkamp levelled five minutes later and the Dutch visitors roared in front with two more before the break. A Carlton Palmer shot and a superb strike by Gary McAllister squared it, but Luc Nilis smashed in a free-kick and added another late on.

Bayern Munich's Jürgen Klinsmann again showed his striking prowess with a deadly double against Raith Rovers at Caster Road. The former Tottenham star struck after six minutes. Raith answered with some verve but failed to level until Klinsmann struck again in the 73rd minute and put the game beyond the Scottish side.

Nottingham Forest, however, gained a vital edge when they beat the French side Auxerre 1-0 after a spirited display. England's new boy Steve Stone scored the goal after 23 minutes and, although Auxerre swarmed forward in search of an equaliser, Forest survived a string of near-misses and cleared twice off the line.

Liverpool had a tricky time against Brondby. Two brilliant reflex saves from David James, the second two minutes from time, kept the score-sheet blank. Liverpool, who were fairly subdued in Denmark, must feel confident of victory when the Danes visit Anfield for the return clash.

Although Paul Gascoigne, along with two other top Rangers stars, Brian Laudrup and Alan McLaren, was not on the field, there were plenty of tears for the Scottish side as they were destroyed 4-1 by Juventus in Turin's Stadio Delle Alpi in the European Champions League Group C.

This, incidentally, was the ground where Gascoigne made headlines by weeping openly for England in the World Cup five years ago.

In Group B, while the Polish capital was celebrating British Week, the players of Legia Warsaw had their thoughts very much on a home victory. They defeated Blackburn Rovers 1-0, thereby inflicting on the English champions their third successive defeat in the competition and removing any realistic chance of them progressing to the knock-out stage.

In the European Cup Winners' Cup, Celtic went down 1-0 to Paris St Germain, and there was little joy for Everton, who completed a disappointing week for Britain by managing a goalless draw against the Dutch team Feyenoord at Goodison Park.

AMERICAN tennis star Mary Jo Fernandez beat South Africa's Amanda Coetzer 6-4, 7-5 in Sunday's farewell final of the Brighton International Tournament, now cast off by the LTA after an 18-year existence. Fernandez became the first American to win the title — worth £50,000 — since Chris Evert in 1985 and only the ninth player to lift it. Steffi Graf, who made an early exit this year, won the trophy six times, followed by Evert with three.



Fernandez: final winner

PERSEVERANCE has paid off for Scotland's golfers at last. After being five times in the semi-finals and twice unsuccessful in the final, they finally won the Alfred Dunhill Cup at St Andrews on Sunday. Colin Montgomerie, Sam Torrance and Andrew Coltart defeated third seeds Zimbabwe and collected £100,000 each.

All three recorded four wins but Coltart was nine, Torrance six and Montgomerie four under par for the five rounds of the tournament.

INDIAN spinner Anil Kumble completed match figures of nine for 120 as his side beat New Zealand by eight wickets in the first Test in Bangalore. Needing 151 to win after dismissing the visitors for 233 in the second innings — New Zealand made 145 in the first and India 228 — the Indians romped home with an hour and two days to spare.

Meanwhile, Sri Lanka maintained their impressive recent run of form by beating West Indies by 50 runs to win the Champions Trophy in Sharjah.

ALFRED KOTEY of Ghana lost his WBO bantamweight title to Puerto Rican Daniel Jiminez on a unanimous points decision in London. Jiminez took a count of eight after he was knocked down in the third round by a vicious left to the body, but he weathered the setback and some pressure before fighting his way back into the contest.

THE race among top football clubs to sign talented youngsters brought a telephone call to Arsenal's youth-development officer, Terry Murphy. It was from a man who extolled his son's excellent ball control and terrific passing, and urged the club not to miss out on the boy's signature. Alas, further inquiries revealed that the young hopeful was only two years old.

Rugby League World Cup Australia 30 N Zealand 20

Kiwis' fight-back proves fruitless

Paul Fitzpatrick

NEW ZEALAND have not played consistently at their best in the World Cup but they have taken part in three of the best games.

On Sunday at Huddersfield they were involved in the most gripping contest so far. They lost, after extra-time, but smothered themselves in glory after saving a cause that seemed lost beyond even a glimmer of hope.

Australia, who now meet England in the final at Wembley on Saturday, led 14-4 at half-time and in the 50th minute a splendid second try from Steve Menzies, scored from deep in his own half, appeared to have taken Australia beyond reach at 20-4.

That was still the score with 19 minutes remaining. But from that point New Zealand found inspiration. It might have had its origins in desperation but Australia were shaken until their teeth rattled.

Some of the New Zealanders' football over that last passage of normal time was reminiscent of the 1980 Kiwis who thrilled English audiences with their handling at high speed and their refusal to let the ball die.

It was hard to imagine there would be a better try than Menzies's second. But in the 61st minute the left-wing Richard Barnett was the last man in a wonderful sweeping move. It ended on the left with Kevin Iro feeding Blackmore and the former Castleford centre, inches from the touchline and challenged by two Australians, somehow squeezing out the try-scoring pass to Barnett.

A contest which had felt one-sided, even flat at times in the first half, was now ablaze and the flames rose even higher when Tony Iro, fed by Ngamu, found enough of a gap to plunge over the line nine minutes from time.

Then, two minutes from the end, Kevin Iro equalised when he blasted his way down the right after Paul, Ridge and Blackmore had created the overlap for him. A successful kick from Ridge, and New Zealand might have been one of the unlikeliest victors of this or any other World Cup. But the full-back was short.

Ridge came within a coat of paint of putting New Zealand into the lead when the game went into extra-time. But, off his weaker left foot, Ridge's drop kick from 45 metres faded just left of the posts.

It was to be the Kiwis' final gesture. The Australians, still with two substitutes unused, finished the fitter side, and tries from Hill, barely seconds out of the sin-bin, and Fittler gave the Kangaroos a flattering margin of victory.

In the other semi-final, England beat Wales 25-10. Phil Larder's assertion that "we have one hell of a strike force — from one to 13" was largely borne out at a sunlit Old Trafford.

Two of England's five tries came from a winger, one from a centre, two from back-row forwards. The statistics show that Wales worked as hard as England and made fewer handling errors but only unlocked England's defence once through Rowland Phillips 14 minutes from time.

On average England have conceded less than seven points a game, and if such miserliness is maintained in the final they may carry off the glittering prize at Wembley.

Football based on sound defence is not necessarily negative. The England coach's philosophy is to recruit attacking players, and then work hard on improving their defence.

New job costs Andrew his international career

Robert Armstrong

ROB ANDREW last week ended his international rugby career, minutes after his club, Wasps, told him they no longer required his services. The London club also left out their captain Dean Ryan, who has accepted an offer from Andrew to join him as player-coach at Newcastle in the new year.

The England manager, Jack Rowell, said he was "stunned at Rob's retirement. What a player, what a gentleman to lose."

Andrew also issued a statement seeking to dispel the uncertainty surrounding his England career: "It is with great regret that I have decided to retire from international rugby. Following Wasps' decision to exclude Dean Ryan and myself I have decided that I must remove myself from any further speculation as to my possible inclusion in the England team."

The axing of Andrew and Ryan, a former England No 8, became Wasps' likely course of action after the Ireland prop Nick Popplewell became the third international at Sudbury to accept a contract with Newcastle.

Andrew, who has 71 caps, and Ryan, who has three, have inadvertently become the first victims of the new professionalism ushered in by the International Board in Paris in August. Both players would probably have quit Wasps and taken up full-time jobs at Newcastle at once were it not for the RFU's 120-day qualification rule, which compels players to remain with their current clubs if they want to keep match fit.

Wasps had been thrown into turmoil by Andrew's recruiting activities. Jeff Probyn, a former Wasps and England team-mate who is now on the RFU committee, declared that Andrew should stand down from Wasps. When Ryan was signed for Newcastle, Andrew's credibility at Sudbury took a sharp downturn.

One of a tiny élite to take part in all three World Cups to date, Andrew won his first cap against Romania in January 1985. Since February 1988 he has been dropped by England only once in favour of Stuart Barnes, who came in for two games in 1993. Last June Andrew was awarded the MBE.